

Riddlesdown Collegiate

Honister Heights, Purley, Surrey CR8 1EX

Inspection dates

17–18 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Riddlesdown Collegiate is led and managed extremely well. Leaders put pupils' progress and welfare at the centre of all that they do.
- Senior leaders, governors and the chief executive have very high expectations and aspirations for pupils. Middle leaders are absolutely committed to this vision and play a fundamental role in making the school exceptionally effective.
- Pupils achieve very well. They make excellent progress from their starting points in nearly all subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than others pupils nationally because they are taught by highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are consistently outstanding. They conduct themselves impeccably in classrooms and around the building.
- Teaching is outstanding because it captivates pupils' interest and challenges their thinking. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and work with purpose. Occasionally, teaching does not challenge pupils to do even better.
- Relationships across the school are hugely positive. Respect for others is deep-rooted in the school's work. Pupils work together exceptionally well to support and learn from each other.
- The school's extremely positive culture ensures that there are very high levels of support and care. As a result, no pupil is left behind in either their academic or personal development.
- The curriculum is exceptional. The Year 7 'excellence curriculum' gives pupils a flying start to their secondary school career. Teachers build on pupils' primary school experiences very skilfully to prepare them for the demands of more advanced work.
- Many pupils attend the very wide variety of extra activities during lunchtime and after school. An impressive array of trips and visits during the year extends pupils' learning and experiences superbly.
- The sixth form is good. Students' progress is improving but is not as rapid as in the rest of the academy. Students' personal development is outstanding.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievements of students in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that more students make expected, and better than expected, progress from their starting points
 - ensuring that, in all subjects, progress is at least good.
- Sharpen teaching to ensure that pupils are challenged to achieve at the highest levels by:
 - ensuring that the feedback teachers give to pupils is of a consistently high quality so that it has a strong impact on learning in all subjects
 - ensuring that high-level questions are used consistently to challenge all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- High-quality leadership and management ensure that pupils and students receive a first-class education. The new principal, senior leaders, and the chief executive and governors share a common vision that puts pupils' achievements and well-being right at the top of the school's priorities. All staff share this passion for excellence and work very successfully to ensure that the school's values are threaded through everything they do.
- The principal's leadership is measured and highly effective. It is based on deeply rooted values, including developing strong partnerships, ensuring the highest level of personal, professional and academic progress for everyone, and preparing young people to reach their potential. As a result, pupils and teachers alike are reflective, aspirational learners.
- The collegiate structure of six colleges, plus one to support pupils with special educational needs or disability, is especially effective. It enables senior leaders to distribute responsibilities widely and extend leadership capacity to more staff. What makes it so effective is the way middle leaders are given the freedom to develop new approaches but are explicitly accountable for pupils' progress and welfare. Consequently, teaching and learning are consistent across the colleges, ensuring that all pupils receive the same high-quality education.
- The school's evaluation of its work is first-rate. Self-evaluation is accurate and perceptive. It is used intelligently to identify well-considered improvement priorities. Middle leaders use the areas for improvement astutely to focus their work. For example, all staff are involved in improvement through 'innovation groups' set up to sharpen the school's teaching approaches. The impact of this work on improving teaching and learning is highly positive, resulting in very high achievement.
- The curriculum is outstanding. The school's Year 7 excellence curriculum, where a third of the time is dedicated to literacy and the humanities, provides exceptionally well for pupils' learning. This is because highly skilled teaching provides activities that are exciting and challenging, building pupils' skills very successfully.
- There is an impressive range of trips and visits that bring the curriculum to life and support learning very effectively. For example, there are some 86 trips this year ranging from visits to theatres, museums, the House of Commons and Southwark Cathedral to New York, Spain and France. These cover nearly all subjects including English, mathematics, science, history, geography, design and technology, music, classics and Latin. During the inspection, pupils from across the school, and from all abilities, were involved in the 'Faraday Challenge' day. Pupils were totally absorbed in the learning, working together very productively to use digital technology.
- The school's provision for pupils who start school with low literacy or numeracy skills is comprehensive. Additional funding is used most effectively. Alongside the excellence curriculum, there are a wide range of interventions to boost pupils' learning, including one-to-one tutoring and after-school classes. Consequently, any gaps in learning narrow quickly.
- The school checks pupils' progress very thoroughly. It collects extensive information about the progress of current pupils across the school. This shows the progress of different groups clearly and simply, including for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs or disability, pupils from different starting points and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, leaders are able to target interventions accurately to those pupils who need it.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The highly inclusive climate of the school promotes genuine respect and tolerance for others. The school ensures that pupils have a very good understanding of British values, including those of democracy and the rule of law. This is because these issues are threaded through many subjects, as well as provided through assemblies, tutor time, personal, social and health education, and religious education. Pupils' personal development is enhanced considerably by the impressively wide range of events, activities and trips, for example the 'college showcases' where each college celebrates achievement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a wide range of skills and experiences and use these very well to support the school. They provide a substantial level of challenge. Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school's priorities and are very clear about areas for improvement.

- Governors are provided with detailed information about the school's performance and visit regularly to see for themselves its work. As a result, governors are well informed about the impact of the school's initiatives and able to ask incisive questions, for example about the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective. Governors and senior leaders meet the current requirements well to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Appropriate checks are made when recruiting staff and the school's record keeping is checked regularly by governors. The school maintains strong links with the local authority and the range of outside agencies that support vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching is highly effective because teachers are skilled and confident in the subjects they teach. They have a very good understanding of how to engross pupils in learning and use a range of effective techniques. Teachers are adept at selecting those techniques that have the most impact on pupils' learning. This ensures that pupils learn effectively and in a way that is best suited to the topic. For example, teachers often get pupils to work in pairs or groups but in the same lesson will also expect them to spend time working on their own.
- In the Year 7 'excellence curriculum', teachers use their primary school experience to make connections between subjects. For example, in one lesson, pupils were learning about history and geography together to study where castles were built. Teachers in Year 7 use questioning very effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and keen to learn.
- High-quality resources are used to stimulate learning. For example, displays in the excellence curriculum classrooms are very attractive and thought provoking, using examples of pupils' work to celebrate learning. 'Learning walls', which show key words or facts about current topics, encourage pupils to improve their work. In other classrooms, examples of pupils' work are used to good effect to support learning such as in graphics.
- Teachers' knowledge of their subject, and of pupils, means that they provide work that is demanding and exciting. They use questions very well to challenge individual pupils and encourage them to think, such as in a Year 8 science lesson where probing questions resulted in pupils making rapid and sustained progress. Teachers rarely accept simple responses but push pupils to explain their answers. As a result, teachers quickly correct any misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning, ensuring that progress is swift.
- Occasionally, questioning is not as effective and this means that pupils are not stretched sufficiently or misunderstandings go unchecked. On these occasions, pupils' progress is not as rapid as it should be.
- Pupils often receive very helpful feedback from teachers about their work. In some cases this is a discussion between teacher and pupil and, in others, a written comment in a book. These are mostly very effective and the impact on learning is clearly evident in pupils' books. For example, comments in Year 11 history books show clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work. However, there are a few instances where the feedback teachers give to pupils does not move learning quickly enough.
- Opportunities for pupils to speak to the whole class, and listen to others, are frequent. Pupils develop their language skills very effectively and are confident readers and articulate speakers. Numeracy skills are also developed well across the school ensuring that pupils have the necessary knowledge for later life.
- Behaviour is managed extremely well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm, friendly and professional. Classroom routines are well established so that pupils know exactly what is expected. As a result, learning is rarely, if ever, disrupted by poor behaviour: a point confirmed by pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders' passion for ensuring that all pupils develop into well-rounded young people, ready to take up their place in society, drives the school's work to provide for pupils' personal development. The school's high expectations are visible in the everyday work of the school, in lessons, at break and lunchtimes, and in the way pupils interact with others. As a result, the atmosphere in all the colleges is highly positive, reflecting the school's values and principles extremely well. Pupils were unanimous that Riddlesdown is 'a strong community' and 'a family'.

- While this sense of family is the result of consistently high expectations across the school, it is also due to the college structure which enables staff to know pupils very well and provide individual help and support. This means that pupils' social and emotional needs are catered for very well, ensuring that all pupils, including vulnerable pupils, are able to do their best in lessons and achieve their potential.
- Safeguarding is a high priority for the school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe because they are taught about issues such as sex and relationships, radicalisation and sexual exploitation in personal, social and health education. Pupils are adamant that bullying is very rare and comment that this is because, when it does happen, it is dealt with very quickly by teachers, usually within a day.
- Many pupils have opportunities to develop their leadership skills taking up positions of responsibility such as subject leader, mentor, prefect, and head boy and girl. In addition, there is the head boys' and head girls' collegiate council which meets regularly with the principal to discuss issues across the school. Pupils' suggestions are used adroitly to influence day-to-day decisions, for example in naming the colleges after the constellations.
- The school provides pupils and students with a good range of information, advice and guidance about careers. The quality of this support has been improved in recent years so its impact on pupils' choices, especially after the sixth form, is effective in steering pupils down the right career path.
- Pupils are resoundingly positive about the school and were unable to identify any areas that the school could improve. They are very positive about the range of support available including tutoring, mentoring and peer mentoring from older pupils and students.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their conduct in lessons and around the school is above reproach. They are polite, well mannered and extremely respectful of others. Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning and are highly appreciative of the support their teachers provide. They all agree that behaviour in classrooms and around the school is calm and well ordered. For example, behaviour in the library at lunchtime is excellent and there is a distinct buzz of concentration.
- Pupils concentrate very well in lessons and are very keen to do well. They contribute willingly to discussions and questions, often asking more questions. This shows their enthusiasm for learning and delight for new ideas. Pupils are skilled at regulating their own behaviour. This is because they are absolutely clear about the rules and expectations, and understand that they are each responsible for enabling others to learn.
- Attendance compares favourably with national figures and pupils' punctuality is nearly always good. Fixed-term exclusions for the school are low.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress from their different starting points. They begin at the school with skills and abilities that are above those typical for their age. They make very good progress in each year and achieve standards that are well above average by the end of Year 11.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school is good and improving rapidly. For example, the school's very thorough systems for tracking pupils' progress shows that the excellence curriculum in Year 7 has had a significant impact on pupils currently in Year 8. Achievements have improved noticeably since last year.
- In English, pupils quickly become proficient readers and writers because they are taught to build up their skills step by step. Those who start with relatively weak skills are given good support so that they catch up with their peers. A recent initiative to encourage pupils to read widely is having a very positive impact and many pupils use the well-stocked library at lunchtime responsibly.
- In mathematics, there is a clear focus on ensuring that pupils master the basic skills. As a result, pupils build up their skills effectively so that they can tackle more advanced work as they get older. They understand the relationships between numbers rather than simply remembering the rules, and this enables them to achieve very well. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, skilled teaching extended pupils' previous learning very effectively, and they were able to use different methods to calculate the size of angles.
- Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress. The school's detailed systems to check progress against demanding targets provides good information on which teachers act swiftly. The colour-coding system, used by all teachers, provides clear information about the progress of individuals which they use effectively to adapt their teaching. As a result, nearly all pupils make more than expected progress.

- Higher-attaining pupils and those with relatively low starting points all make at least expected progress with many making more than expected progress. This is because all pupils, whatever their starting point, are supported expertly by teachers and teaching assistants. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, pupils learning different calculation methods were supported skilfully to make at least good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make similarly good progress as their peers. This is because the support provided by specialist teachers and teaching assistants is well targeted. They use a range of approaches, including one-to-one or in-class support depending on what is most suitable.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The sixth form is not yet outstanding because students are not making consistently good progress across all subjects. However, students' achievements are improving.
- The sixth-form leaders are ambitious for their students and passionate about their well-being and outcomes. They are realistic, quick to identify those aspects of provision that need improving and to develop initiatives to tackle these. For example, a recent evaluation of the sixth form has resulted in a range of strategies to improve provision and students' outcomes. These include tougher entry requirements to ensure that students choose suitable courses ensuring that they are less likely to fail.
- Evidence shows that these strategies are having a positive impact. The proportion of students who complete their sixth-form course is very high, as is their attendance. Students receive comprehensive advice at the start of their courses and dedicated careers information. They know what to expect and are prepared well for higher education, training or employment.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and go out of their way to prepare students thoroughly for examinations. Assessment is focused squarely on giving students information about how to improve their skills and the quality of their work. Students respond very well to this feedback to redraft their work or highlight where they need to make improvements. However, work sometimes lacks challenge because teachers do not identify high enough targets. In 2015, this resulted in too little progress in some subjects, for example in sociology and history.
- One of the initiatives to improve students' outcomes is the provision of a comprehensive professional development programme for teachers. This is having a positive impact on the progress of the current sixth form because students are being given the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in their examinations more effectively. The school's assessment information indicates a rise in achievement this year.
- The personal development of sixth-form students is outstanding. Students have a great many opportunities to take responsibility such as head boy and head girl, mentoring younger pupils and developing their leadership skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is first-rate. They leave the school as thoughtful, mature and well-adjusted young people who are ready to take up their place in society as responsible citizens.

School details

Unique reference number	138178
Local authority	London Borough of Croydon
Inspection number	10008714

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,932
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	306
Appropriate authority	The Collegiate Trust
Chair	Mrs Karen Myring
Principal	Mr Soumick Dey
Telephone number	020 8668 5136
Website	www.riddlesdown.org
Email address	admin@riddlesdown.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Riddlesdown Collegiate is a much larger than average-sized secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 19. Its predecessor school, also called Riddlesdown Collegiate, was judged as good when it was inspected in October 2011.
- The school opened in June 2012 and established the Riddlesdown Collegiate Academy Trust. In November 2015, the trust changed its name the Collegiate Trust.
- The current principal took up the post in November 2015.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with a larger proportion than average coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. A smaller than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school meets the requirements on publication of specified information on its website.
- Teachers support other schools in the local authority, for example in English.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Learning was observed in 71 lessons or part-lessons across all year groups and subjects, including the sixth form. Some of these were jointly observed with school leaders. Inspectors also visited form time and looked at arrangements at break and lunchtime.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised during the observation of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the chair of the board of directors and a member of the local governing body, the principal, vice-principals, assistant principals and middle leaders, a range of staff, and groups of pupils including those eligible for extra funding.
- A range of documentation and policies were scrutinised which included records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and information on the progress made by pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document, records relating to the quality of teaching, the school development plan and information about extra-curricular activities and the role of governors. They also looked in detail at the school's assessment information.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures.
- Inspectors took account of the 156 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and looked at staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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