

Redhill School and Specialist Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103865
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	376982
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2011
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger King
Headteacher	Stephen Dunster
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
School address	Junction Road Stourbridge DY8 1JX
Telephone number	01384 816355
Fax number	01384 816356
Email address	info@redhill.dudley.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors, who observed 44 lessons taught by 41 teachers. They held meetings with groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of students' attainment and progress; the school's development plans; records of checks on teaching, and documents relating to the safeguarding of students. They also analysed responses to questionnaires completed by students and 395 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Have the apparent improvements in boys' performance since the dip in 2010 been maintained?
- How well do the school's leaders identify and tackle the causes of any differences in students' performance between subjects?
- How effective is the provision in helping students, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities related to medical issues, to make up work missed through absence?

Information about the school

This specialist school for languages is larger than most other secondary schools. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most students come from a White British background, with small numbers coming from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. None are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A new headteacher took up post in September 2010.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It provides excellent value for money. Students leave Year 11 fully equipped with the skills and qualities they need for the next stage of education and their later lives. The exceptional care, guidance and support provided lead to high quality outcomes in terms of students' personal development. Students are rightly very proud of the part they play in making the school an excellent place to learn. Their attitudes and behaviour are exemplary, resulting in a calm, orderly and very harmonious community where students from all backgrounds feel exceptionally safe. Students readily take on many roles of responsibility within school, including giving their opinions on how learning can be improved. The school's specialism provides them with a good understanding of life in other countries, but opportunities to become involved with the local community are more limited. Students' academic progress is equally outstanding. Attainment has been high for a number of years and is improving faster than the national average.

The school's academic successes are a result of outstanding teaching and a curriculum that is exceptionally well matched both to students' needs and their interests. Teachers have high expectations of how much and how quickly students will learn. The proportion of lessons that result in outstanding learning is high. Most other lessons are taught well. However, in these, students do not learn quite as much because they are not given the opportunity to think deeply about the topics they are learning or to explain their understanding.

The headteacher's vision of high expectations of, and equality for, all groups of students pervades all aspects of the school's work. Staff respond enthusiastically to the senior leaders' commitment to providing high quality in all that it does. Accurate self-evaluation is based on the sophisticated use of data to identify where performance can be improved further. The school continues to go from strength to strength and its track record is clear evidence of an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers encourage students to think deeply about the concepts they are learning and articulate more precisely their understanding of them.
- Provide students with more opportunities to play a part in the local community.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students' achievement is outstanding. They say that they very much enjoy coming to school, a view that is supported by their parents and carers. Attendance is high and continues to improve. Students join the school with average attainment in Year 7 and leave with high levels of attainment. Results are far in excess of the national averages at both GCSE and in AS levels taken in Year 11. All groups achieve exceptionally well, including boys whose performance dipped in 2010. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed very thoroughly as soon as they join the school so their needs are well known by all staff. Teachers then closely match tasks to their needs and abilities which supports their outstanding learning and progress. Students arrive at lessons ready to learn. They immediately get down to work on the starter activities. Students concentrate hard and pay full attention to their teacher. Many take notes of key points without having to be told, so they can quickly refer to them when moving on to their next activity. The quality of cooperation and discussion in groups is outstanding. Students listen attentively to one another, argue their opinions and take on board those held by others. Their exemplary behaviour plays a strong part in learning, as no time is lost through teachers having to deal with misbehaviour. Exclusions are very rare.

Students are exceptionally well-mannered. They are polite and welcoming towards visitors, interested in their views of the school and on current affairs. Students have great confidence in staff to address any concerns they may have. They also have confidence in other students, such as prefects and mentors. A very high proportion of students, representing all groups within the school, take up posts of responsibility that help to develop their confidence and life skills such as independence. Students' moral and social development is outstanding. They have a great sense of fair play and are quick to challenge areas where they feel an injustice has been done. Staff take their opinions seriously and use them as part of the school's self-evaluation. Students possess a good ability to reflect on spiritual matters, but do not always have the opportunity to demonstrate such deeper thinking in lessons. Students have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and benefit from good quality guidance on sexual health matters. A very high proportion takes part in at least three hours of physical education each week.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

¹ 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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The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to provide courses that are flexible enough to meet the needs of individuals. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is modified so that students can be fast-tracked through courses. This allows them to start GCSE courses earlier than usual, take examinations early and go on to study extra subjects at GCSE or AS level in Year 11. The curriculum is also very well balanced. All students study a modern foreign language, a creative subject and science, for example. There is a vast range of extra clubs and activities that are exceptionally well supported by students, especially in the performing arts. The school carefully identifies the interests of those who are not involved in these. Courses are put on specifically to enable them to have something at school that they really enjoy and in which they can take part.

The school day is extended by an extra lesson for those students who may be falling behind with their work or are in need of extra support. This is particularly effective for those students who have been absent and allows them to quickly make up the time lost. It has also dissuaded students from taking time off unless really necessary, as they know they will have to attend extra lessons outside of the regular school day. Attendance has improved significantly as a result. Very strong partnerships are maintained with hospitals, to make sure that students with special educational needs related to medical issues are helped to keep up with work that is going on in school. Partnerships with other schools and agencies are also highly effective in ensuring students make a smooth transition between schools and that those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are very well supported.

Teachers have an infectious enthusiasm for their subjects. Methods are adapted very well to meet the needs of different groups, especially to meet the needs of boys more effectively. Boys have shorter-term targets than girls, for example. In modern foreign languages boys are taught in teams which compete against each other, which appeals to boys' competitive nature. Teachers use data from assessments exceptionally well to match work to students' prior attainment and to provide teaching assistants with the information they need to provide good quality support for students. The brisk start to lessons is maintained throughout as teachers push

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the pace of learning along by allowing only short periods for tasks to be completed. Students receive high quality feedback on their learning, both verbally and in writing. Girls are particularly motivated by their weekly targets in science because they are given precise guidance on exactly what they need to do to improve.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteachers' drive for continued improvement is supported by an outstanding team of senior and middle managers. Students' progress is comprehensively checked and analysed to identify groups who may be falling behind and to target extra monitoring at the likely causes. Staff receive high quality feedback on their teaching, which is linked to a wide range of opportunities for their professional development. Partnerships are used very well to take advantage of the expertise available at other schools. This has been particularly successful in raising achievement in subjects in which students have not performed as well as in others. Partnerships with other schools and colleges are also strengthened through the school's specialist status, and the school has many international links. The effectiveness of the governing body is good. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide good challenge, for example in relation to the dip in boys' performance in 2010 to ensure that it did not recur. Their oversight of child protection is comprehensive. The designated governor plays a leading role in ensuring that safeguarding goes beyond just meeting requirements, for example, through the detailed documentation.

Equality is at the heart of the school's work. The school employs sophisticated systems to analyse the progress, participation, attainment and involvement in school life of each group of students. Adaptations and improvements to the school's site and facilities have supported rising achievements for specific groups and access for disabled students. The gap in progress between boys and girls has been closed completely. The attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals is rising rapidly as they make even better progress than others and make up for their lower attainment on entry to the school. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and students are taught to challenge any such behaviour. The school has carried out a thorough audit of its needs in terms of the promotion of community cohesion and has a good plan of action in place. The school is a highly cohesive community and students are taught much about European cultures, in particular. Links with the community outside of school are less well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very happy with much that the school provides. Their views are similar to the inspection findings. They are very positive about the extent to which students enjoy school and are kept safe, the progress students make, the quality of teaching, students' behaviour and the school's leadership and management. They have two areas of concern. The first is related to the contents of vending machines and school dinners in supporting healthy lifestyles. Inspectors checked these and discussed them with students. They observed the choices being made at break and lunchtimes. They concluded that the vending machines had too many unhealthy options, such as fizzy drinks and crisps, and some students were not choosing the healthier options available at lunchtime. Some parents and carers were also concerned that they did not receive replies to the letters regarding helping their child to do better in school. This was difficult to check as responses were anonymous and it could be that letters had gone astray. Nevertheless, this issue was also raised in the response to the school's own questionnaire. Consequently, the school plans to review its procedures in order to improve the systems for communicating with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Redhill School and Specialist Language College 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 395 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	163	41	212	54	16	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	171	44	211	54	9	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	135	34	222	56	32	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	150	38	216	55	15	4	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	134	34	232	59	16	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	102	26	234	60	46	12	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	90	23	253	64	42	11	2	1
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)	135	34	222	56	15	4	3	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	130	33	233	59	22	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	134	34	214	54	28	7	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	96	24	224	57	35	9	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	151	38	221	56	12	3	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	184	47	193	49	9	2	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



16 November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Redhill School and Specialist Language College, Stourbridge, DY8 1JX

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. You were all very welcoming and polite. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. You told us how proud you are of your achievements and of your school. You have every right to be. You go to an outstanding school where you take full advantage of the many opportunities it offers you. You leave Year 11 with high levels of attainment, having made outstanding progress. The teaching you receive is of high quality. Your teachers expect a lot of you and you respond exceptionally well. You concentrate and work hard in lessons, but we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to think more deeply about some of the topics you study. You have a very wide range of courses and extra activities from which to choose and these are very well modified to meet your individual needs and interests.

You all told us how safe you felt at school and how impressed you were with all the different types of support that you receive. You play an important part in this support through your roles as prefects and mentors. You are quick to volunteer to take responsibility and carry out your roles diligently. We have asked your headteacher to provide you more opportunities to play a part in the local community. You can help by volunteering when they become available.

Your school continues to improve every year. Your headteacher sets the tone by having high expectations and expecting everyone to do as well as they possibly can during their time at school. He is supported by an outstanding group of managers who analyse all aspects of your performance in great depth. This enables them to quickly address any deficiencies they find, or any concerns that you may have.

With all best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll
Lead inspector

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