

Raynes Park High School

Bushey Road, London SW20 0JL

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership has maintained the good quality of education at the school since the previous inspection.
- The school is a welcoming, purposeful and sociable centre of learning. Staff model leaders' high expectations so that pupils are considerate and respectful towards each other and their teachers.
- Leaders carefully plan a curriculum so that individual pupils study subjects and gain qualifications that match their career aspirations. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education and employment.
- Teachers convey their strong subject knowledge confidently and enthusiastically. Pupils are motivated and keen to learn.
- Leaders oversee accurate and comprehensive assessment systems. Teachers use these effectively to guide pupils on how to improve their work and deepen their learning.
- There is a well-organised, thorough approach to safeguarding pupils across the school. Pupils feel safe in the school and are alert to contemporary risks because of the guidance they receive.
- Rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form mean that students are making good progress. Leaders ensure that students have good academic and pastoral support to manage their studies successfully.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and for those who speak English as an additional language, is a strength of the school. Pupils receive personalised, intensive support so they achieve well.
- Leaders value highly their communications and contact with parents. A range of initiatives has led to increasing numbers of parents attending school events.
- Pupils generally make good progress across the curriculum. Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than their peers. While this gap has reduced overall, it persists in older year groups.
- Overall attendance is above average. However, disadvantaged pupils are absent from school more often than their peers.
- On occasions, pupils do not move on to more complex work when they are ready. This limits progress, especially of the most able pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Intensify the successful strategies to support disadvantaged pupils so that:
 - disadvantaged pupils achieve equally well as their peers, especially in the older year groups
 - the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils reduces further.
- Ensure that best practice in the use of assessment to inform teachers' planning is reflected across the school so that:
 - pupils, including the most able, are motivated and engaged by the challenge they need to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Ensure that there is a smooth and well-informed transition to new leadership of the sixth form so that the strengths and impact of the interim leadership continue.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have nurtured a very congenial and industrious environment across the school, in which mutually respectful relationships and positive rapport between staff and pupils prevail. The very large majority of pupils who completed the survey for this inspection agreed that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.
- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has restructured and strengthened the leadership team. Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of all aspects of the school. Leaders have revised and renewed the school's strategies and systems, focusing on the priorities for improvement swiftly and successfully.
- Leaders' regular monitoring means they have a thorough overview of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. A well-planned programme of training and guidance enables teachers to improve and develop their skills. Targeted support for individuals is put in place when improvements to teaching are needed. New staff, including newly qualified teachers, receive comprehensive induction. They value leaders' immediate consideration of suitable professional development opportunities.
- Leaders have successfully implemented a revised assessment policy so that staff and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils understand how to improve their work, which leads to them making better progress in most subjects. Leaders review and refine policies in consultation with staff, being considerate of everyone's workload and well-being.
- Middle leaders' development is ongoing, with increasingly clear lines of accountability for the performance of their teams. They gain much from regular and purposeful guidance through their senior line management so that rapid improvements are made where needed. Middle leaders value their frequent opportunities to get together to share good practice. Senior leaders oversee appropriate interim arrangements, for example in the leadership of the music department and in the sixth form, to minimise the impact on pupils of staff changes.
- Leaders carefully plan the curriculum so that pupils experience a broad range of subjects which routinely provide spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, the Year 7 curriculum provides pupils with a comprehensive introduction to the variety of subjects to be covered in secondary school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about the range of topics and activities that extended from their class text about the Second World War. These included being introduced to contrasting regions of the United Kingdom, considering the experiences of refugee children, and learning to jive. Older pupils can choose to study areas that match their aspirations. Leaders are especially mindful of ensuring pupils study for qualifications that will prepare them well for the next stages of their education and employment.
- Leaders have worked hard to boost communications with parents so that attendance to meetings and school events is increasing. Initiatives such as the 'Put the kettle on' meetings, when leaders combine information sharing and social activities, are increasingly popular. The very large majority of parents who completed Parent View,

the Ofsted online survey, are positive about the school, agreed that they receive valuable information from the school about their child's progress, and that the school is well led and managed.

- Leaders have forged productive links with primary schools so that pupils' transition to secondary school is smooth. Pupils and parents feel well-informed about what is to be expected so that pupils feel prepared and confident as they quickly settle into the new routines.
- Leaders maintain close contact with the alternative provision organised for a few pupils. Positive and regular communications demonstrate that school staff are committed to providing pupils with the optimum arrangements to improve their attendance and progress.
- Leaders' procedures for documenting the movement of pupils and their destinations when they leave the school is well organised and thorough.
- The work of the school is enhanced by links with outside organisations. Leaders draw productively on sources of external support, including the local authority. Collaboration with local schools and universities provides valuable developmental opportunities for staff and pupils.

Governance of the school

- The governing body comprises a valuable combination of governors with long-standing experience of the school and those that are comparatively new. Together, they ensure that helpful insight and understanding of the school's effectiveness over time are increasingly applied to current priorities.
- Governors maintain regular and positive communications with school leaders. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development because of their well-organised visits to the school and reports from school leaders. They have an accurate view of the next steps needed for the school's further development.
- Governors audit their skills and organise training accordingly. This helps them to be better-placed to ask leaders the right questions and uphold their responsibilities, including safeguarding and their oversight of the expenditure of the pupil premium.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures are well organised and demonstrate leaders', including governors', commitment to ensuring all staff meet their responsibility to safeguard pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding records are thorough and up to date, including those relating to the employment of staff. Training, with regular updates, enables staff to understand and fulfil their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. The school's processes for the reporting and follow up of concerns are comprehensive and demonstrate that staff are rightly alert to signs that a pupil may be at risk.
- The school works closely with the safer schools officer to raise pupils' awareness of safeguarding concerns and to be alert to local risks. The school liaises effectively with

outside agencies to provide pupils with the information and support they need to protect their well-being and keep safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers demonstrate confident knowledge in, and enthusiasm for, their subjects. This motivates pupils and stimulates their interests. Teachers plan effectively and use questioning thoughtfully to enable pupils to recall and apply prior learning. Pupils recognise the relevance of their tasks to the next stages in their learning.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils' levels of attentiveness and the quality of their work, so that pupils take care with, and pride in, their completed tasks. Pupils know what they have to do, and the purpose of their tasks, because of their teachers' clear explanations.
- Teachers generally have a common approach to the assessment of work in pupils' books. Pupils appreciate the support and guidance their teachers give them which help to improve their work and make good progress.
- Teachers take into account their knowledge of individual pupils and aspects of learning that some might find difficult. In the strongest lessons, targeted support, encouragement and questioning help pupils to make good progress, developing their vocabulary and use of technical terms.
- There is some variation in how well teachers use achievement information to enable pupils to deepen and extend their knowledge when they are ready. This is especially the case for most-able pupils when they do not have the opportunity to complete the more complex work of which they are capable.
- Pupils are generally engaged with their learning and are responsive to their teachers' expectations. However, where teachers' expectations are not high enough, pupils become distracted. On a very few occasions, pupils' behaviour becomes disruptive.
- When teachers' use of assessment does not follow leaders' expectations, pupils do not improve their work. In particular, this applies to pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling so that errors, including in the use of technical vocabulary, persist.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- Pupils are clear on the school's behaviour policy, that teachers use rewards and sanctions fairly and that these systems work well. Younger pupils, in particular, appreciate the range of rewards, such as stickers, phone calls and postcards home.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They know from the earliest stages of being in school that there is a range of adults they can go to if they have any worries. Pupils are very confident that any problems will be resolved.
- A programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), assemblies and themed days provides pupils with age-appropriate guidance on contemporary risks

to their safety and welfare. Leaders consider the optimum approach to dealing with sensitive topics in lessons and assemblies, seeking relevant external advice and training. A range of initiatives nurtures pupils' consideration and respect for others, so, for example, they are keen to organise fundraising events for various charities.

- A wide range of extracurricular opportunities and events enriches pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy trips to the theatre, visiting local businesses and entering dance and sporting competitions. Excursions enable pupils to broaden their outlook and experiences, for example the geography trip that included pupils using every type of public transport in London, including boats and cable cars.
- Leaders' overview of levels of participation ensures that the proportions of disadvantaged pupils taking part in enrichment events are increasing.
- The school's work with healthcare professionals from local universities and other organisations promotes good mental health and support for pupils when they need it.
- Younger pupils interact positively with older pupils. Year 7 pupils described how welcome they felt in their first house assembly when all the older pupils applauded them when they arrived.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are respectful to each other and the adults who work with them. They were polite and welcoming to the inspection team, expressing loyalty and pride in their school.
- Pupils generally conduct themselves sensibly around the school. Incidents of poor and boisterous behaviour are comparatively rare.
- Leaders are vigilant to the patterns of pupils' behaviour that in the past have led to fixed-term exclusions. Leaders thoroughly monitor the use of sanctions and provide extra support for pupils to help manage their behaviour. These actions have been effective in reducing exclusions.
- Overall attendance has improved over recent years and is above the national average. Similarly, levels of persistent absence have fallen. Vigilant tracking and follow up with appropriate support mean that the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils is also reducing. However, disadvantaged pupils continue to have higher levels of absence than other pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders are clear on ways in which outcomes for pupils have needed to improve and have taken appropriate and effective actions. Changes to the structure of the school timetable and the curriculum, as well as embedding assessment systems, have all contributed to ensuring that current pupils are making good progress.
- In recent years, pupils have overall made average progress across most subjects. Pupils achieve consistently well in mathematics, making above-average progress. The

school's current information and pupils' work indicate that pupils are improving their achievement in most subjects, including English.

- Regular review of pupils' progress identifies those individuals and groups of pupils who are underachieving. Leaders have overseen innovative approaches to, for example, boost the motivation and achievement of boys. Leaders are tenacious in their implementation of a range of interventions to support disadvantaged pupils. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is reducing. This is especially evident in younger year groups.
- Provision for pupils with SEND, both in the mainstream and in the Access Centre, is a strength of the school. Leaders oversee the right provision and personalised support so that individual pupils make good progress in meeting their individual targets. This enables pupils to move on to the next stages of their education successfully.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those who join the school as beginners, make good progress. This is because strong leadership of their provision ensures that accurate assessments inform bespoke support for pupils, and the whole-staff training provides teachers with helpful, relevant strategies. Pupils rapidly access learning in the classroom and catch up with their peers.
- The school encourages pupils to read regularly through a range of initiatives as well as through regular opportunities for pupils to read in class. Pupils appreciate the value of reading and confidently use a range of written resources to support their learning.
- The impact of leaders' work is especially evident in younger year groups, so that the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing across all subjects. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils in older year groups catch up with others. While targeted interventions are in place, larger gaps persist, especially in the current Year 11.
- On occasions, teachers do not recognise swiftly enough when pupils are ready to apply their learning to more challenging work. This means that some pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress of which they are capable.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Interim senior leadership of the sixth form has been highly effective in making the improvements needed. Leaders have responded swiftly to their own evaluations and external review. They have rapidly made the necessary changes and developments, including to curriculum planning and provision and systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
- The applied courses have a long history of strong performance. The school has analysed carefully the basis of the disappointing A-level results in 2018. Leaders have taken assertive and highly effective actions, including targeted training and closer monitoring, to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form.
- Leaders have ensured the process of assessment is well moderated and more accurate. This is evident in students' work over time as well as in the school's own achievement information. Current students' books and folders show that they are completing high-quality, challenging work and making much improved progress across different subjects. This includes those subjects in which students have performed less well in

recent years. Students resitting GCSE English or mathematics make above average progress.

- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are strong, with a broad and structured programme across both year groups. Students speak highly of the extensive pastoral care which has helped them to manage their studies successfully and support their health and well-being.
- Leaders have ensured that recruitment to courses is purposeful and appropriate so that students study courses that are right for them and match their aspirations. The careers programme is commended by students, who receive personalised support so that they are well-placed to make successful applications to their chosen next steps.
- Steps taken to improve attendance and punctuality in Year 12 and Year 13 have worked well.
- Students have excellent attitudes to their studies. They are confident, ambitious and articulate.

School details

Unique reference number	102674
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10086797

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1034
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Ross
Headteacher	Kirsten Heard
Telephone number	0208 946 4112
Website	www.raynespark.merton.sch.uk
Email address	school@raynespark.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The number of pupils on roll has increased since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of pupils with an education and health care plan (EHC plan) is above average, as is the proportion receiving support with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- There is a well-above-average proportion of pupils eligible for support with the pupil premium funding.

- More pupils than average speak English as an additional language. Pupils represent a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Most pupils represent White British backgrounds.
- The school includes a special unit for pupils who have an EHC plan for autism spectrum disorder, attended by 23 pupils.
- The school uses an off-site pupil referral unit, the Smart Centre at The Chaucer Centre, Canterbury Rd, Morden SM4 6PT. This is alternative provision for a few pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, including governors, a group of new teachers, groups of pupils, and a representative of the local authority. One inspector held a telephone conversation with a leader at the alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors visited classrooms to see the learning that was taking place, usually accompanied by school leaders. The lead inspector toured the school with the headteacher. One inspector observed an assembly and others visited registration periods.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors held informal conversations with staff and pupils.
- The response to surveys completed by 125 pupils and 86 members of staff were considered. Inspectors also considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, including the free-text comments, completed by 79 parents.
- A wide range of documentation was evaluated including: records relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the recruitment of staff; the school’s self-evaluation and improvement planning; published and the school’s own achievement information; records relating to pupils’ attendance and their destinations on leaving the school; and records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and of behaviour.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Geoff Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Cavanagh	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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