

Rooks Heath College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137198
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	395313
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Trevor Riddiough HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1026
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Hughes
Headteacher	John Reavley
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2008
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Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	4–5 July 2012
Inspection number	395313



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Introduction

Inspection team

Trevor Riddiough	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Cummings	Additional Inspector
Najoud Ensaff	Additional Inspector
Jalil Shaikh	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed 33 lessons taught by 31 teachers, of which 4 were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. They also sat in on five tutor groups and one assembly. Inspectors carried out brief visits to a series of other lessons and held meetings with senior leaders and other staff, groups of students, and members of the governing body. They observed the college's work and looked at the tracking of students' progress, performance data, students' work, whole-college and subject development plans, numerous policies, college documents, incident logs and case studies. Completed questionnaires from 91 parents and carers, 84 students and 52 staff were received and analysed.

Information about the school

This college is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form serving a culturally and socially diverse community in South Harrow. Students also attend the college from three neighbouring London boroughs. Nearly all the students have minority ethnic heritages, and nearly half of students are from Asian backgrounds. About two thirds of the students speak English as an additional language and many are at the early stages of speaking English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above average. There is high student mobility as a large number of students join and leave the college throughout the school year. The college is a specialist business and enterprise college. It is also a Leading Edge School which means that the college shares its practice with other schools. The sixth form offers a range of courses on site in partnership with the Harrow Collegiate. This partnership enables students based at a school sixth form or college locally to access courses provided at other schools. The college meets government current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Rooks Heath College is an outstanding school and one that continues to improve. The sixth form is good.
- Students' achievement is outstanding. Students enter in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are well below average. They leave at the end of Year 11 with attainment that is average. This represents outstanding progress for the majority of students, given their low starting points. This includes students who are disabled or have special educational needs and also those learning English as an additional language. In the sixth form, students make good progress in most, but not all, of their courses.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers are very committed to ensuring the success of all students. Assessment procedures include regular checks on students' progress and these inform teachers how to challenge students and extend their learning. However, occasionally the over direction by teachers in lessons limits independent working and reduces progress in lessons.
- The behaviour of students around the college is exemplary. They are courteous, considerate and cooperate well when moving between lessons and in their social time. Racial abuse and incidents of bullying are extremely rare. Attitudes to learning are usually very positive in lessons and students say that they feel very safe in the college.
- The college leadership at all levels works hard to secure continuous improvement over a sustained period. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are highly effective. The college knows its strengths and the areas to develop further extremely well. Monitoring and evaluation of students' progress are carried out rigorously and, along with the outstanding curriculum and promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensure that the needs and interests of all students are met very effectively, particularly those students who arrive in college mid year.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by providing more opportunities for students to develop higher-order skills as independent learners in all lessons.
- Raise the level of attainment in the sixth form further by ensuring that teaching promotes the success of all students in all subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students arrive in college with levels of attainment that are well below average including, for many, very low levels of literacy. By the time the students leave at the end of Year 11 the percentage of students gaining five or more good grades at GCSE is above average, while the proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics is broadly average. Most parents and carers are very positive about the progress their child makes at the college, summed up in comments such as, 'My child has made amazing progress.' 'An exhilarating learning environment.' 'Ever-increasing grades.' 'Constant challenge.' Inspectors concur; they found that students make outstanding progress throughout the college and the college's current data show they are now on target to reach levels of attainment that are even higher. This shows sustained improvement on recent years.

The college monitors progress carefully to check for any underachievement and has worked successfully to close any gaps so that all groups make expected or better progress. The college has been particularly successful at improving the attainment of a very challenging and unusually large group of students who enter the college after Year 7 from many other countries of the world. Careful and tailored provision including an intensive induction programme, a personally tailored curriculum and targeted support ensures that this group rapidly establishes the basic skills that these students need to catch up with their peers. The gap between the progress of students known to be eligible for free school meals and that of similar groups nationally has also been successfully targeted by the college and is closing.

The college's leaders have introduced highly effective measures to improve levels of literacy rapidly. As a result, all students quickly develop the literacy and communication skills necessary to make positive contributions in all their lessons.

Outstanding progress is supported by highly effective teaching in lessons. In the best lessons, planning focuses on meeting the needs of all students in the class so that they are interested, challenged and actively engaged in their learning. For some students tasks are adapted to ensure that all are able to work at their capacity. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress. This is due to the systems used to make an early identification of needs and then to tailor support where it is most effective.

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Levels of attainment in the sixth form are broadly average in AS- and A-level courses. Students generally make good progress from below average starting points. However, in some subjects, progress is variable and not all students achieve the highest grades possible. Where this occurs, it is linked to teaching which does not extend students sufficiently.

Quality of teaching

Teachers' subject knowledge, focused planning, productive relationships and consistently high expectations ensure that virtually all students make rapid and sustained progress. Teachers plan a good range of activities that sustain students' interest and develop higher-order skills of extended thinking, collaborative group work and independent study. In a sixth form mathematics lesson, students worked intensively in pairs on a complex problem and arrived at the same solution using different methodologies dependent on their abilities, thereby ensuring that all students were suitably challenged. In a Year 8 physical education lesson, different groups of students worked hard to develop their practical bowling skills using a range of approaches designed to extend all learners regardless of their ability. These positive features are not, however, universal. In a minority of lessons, teachers over-direct lessons and occasionally activities are not geared sufficiently to promote independent study.

Assessment of students' learning has been successfully developed by subject teachers and the information gathered is incorporated into future lesson planning. Students appreciate the critical advice that they receive from their teachers and most act on it appropriately. This highly effective assessment practice ensures that students' progress can be effectively tracked and maintained.

The development of communication and literacy skills is strong and all curriculum areas promote this aspect successfully. Intensive strategies are employed to accelerate students' literacy skills when the students arrive in college. These include language intervention programmes, phonics (letters and the sounds they make) awareness training, accelerated reading programmes and dyslexia courses. Key words are highlighted and explained in every lesson and teachers are aware of language competences within the class and then adapt their resources accordingly. In one lesson observed, a newcomer to the class at an early stage of learning English was 'buddied' with a student from the same home country who was able to provide a range of support through translation, whilst a highly structured writing frame enabled her to contribute alongside her peers. Teachers develop similarly good relationships with disabled students and those who have special educational needs and know them well. The care and support provided for them build their confidence quickly which motivates and encourages them to participate fully in their lessons.

Parents and carers unanimously agree that their child is taught well at the college and helped to develop their basic skills.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students overwhelmingly say that they feel very safe and that behaviour is always very good. Parents and carers agree. Comments, such as the school 'provides a safe, maturing and challenging environment', 'my children really enjoy their lessons', 'lucky to be part of the Rooks Heath family', illustrate these very positive viewpoints.

Students are highly courteous and respectful to each other, their teachers and visitors. They enjoy open access to the college's facilities at all times and their teachers are always available. The highly personalised curriculum has also has a positive impact on student behaviour as students generally find their courses interesting and challenging.

The college has made considerable impact on improving behaviour through initiatives and strategies used to promote high standards and expectations across the college. Expectations for all students are clear and the procedures are applied consistently by all staff. The college carefully tracks students' behaviour and has a comprehensive picture of this to tackle it positively. College records show that incidents of bullying are rare. Students report that where they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively through the college's highly effective pastoral system. Students have a very clear awareness of what constitutes different types of bullying and are well prepared to deal with all types of bullying, including cyber, homophobic and racial. As a result, there are strong elements of community cohesion which are felt by all students. This is best summed up by students' comments such as, 'We are all different and we just accept each other.' 'We all have friends from different racial backgrounds.'

Attendance is monitored closely for all students and overall attendance is rising. It is now average across the range of groups enrolled at the college.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders and governors have a concern for the day-to-day matters of the college as well as for its future success. The college's improvement plan is fundamental to this long-term success and provides clear direction based on evaluations of its own performance which are honest, rigorous, and robust. There is a high degree of collaboration among staff for the benefit of the students. The college's highly inclusive approach to its work ensures that all students are welcomed, cared for and supported to give their very best. As a result, no student is in danger of being left out or left behind. Consequently, the college is highly effective in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

College leaders at all levels are adept at sustaining and improving high-quality teaching. Visionary leadership, led by lead teachers, has driven improvements through tailored programmes of professional development. Structured observation and monitoring programmes identify teachers in need of specific development. These programmes are designed to build the confidence of teachers to take risks in their

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teaching and to make it exciting. Lesson observations and student progress information form the basis for staff's continuing professional development, as well as managing their performance.

The curriculum is a real strength and contributes significantly to the high levels of achievement seen. The curriculum is designed around the needs of every student and it also supports their integration into the college if they are mid-term entries. One-year GCSE courses enable wider choice and the chance for early success. The mix of courses, including foundation learning, bridging courses, booster learning and induction courses, prepares students well to commence their examination courses which include academic and vocational options. The business and enterprise specialism has widened opportunities further in the area of commerce.

External partnerships are strong. Lead teachers work in partnership with other schools to develop their practice and share ideas. The Harrow Collegiate works effectively to enhance the range of provision for its sixth form students. Close family liaison ensures that support can be given in the wider aspects of improving attendance, developing language acquisition and providing additional help to those whose circumstances could make them vulnerable.

The college is a highly cohesive community with students from rich and diverse cultural heritages. This promotes students' understanding of diverse cultures exceptionally well. Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is promoted through a well-organised and effective programme of theme-based assemblies, courses in personal development, religious studies and ethics lessons. Students readily participate in these activities and have good opportunities to reflect on, and discuss, moral and topical issues. These provide strong ethics of dignity, humility and respect in the lives of all students.

Since the previous inspection the college has raised levels of attainment, improved teaching, behaviour and attendance considerably which demonstrate that its capacity to improve further is excellent. Safeguarding is robust with clear policies and thorough assessment of risk. Senior leaders and governors set the safety of students as a key priority.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



6 July 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Rooks Heath College, Harrow HA2 9AH

Firstly, thank you for the warm welcome you gave us during the inspection. We found it very helpful to talk with you, look at your work and visit your lessons. You helped us to understand what it is really like to be a student at your college. We were particularly pleased to see you enjoying your lessons and seeing you welcome Year 6 students into your college on their induction day.

We found that your college provides you with an outstanding education. You are making exceptional progress in most of your lessons which you clearly enjoy. In the sixth form you generally make good progress. We also noticed that many of you who arrive later into the college also make exceptionally good progress. This is due to the effective support you receive from your teachers to settle in and develop the speaking, reading and writing skills you need to make a full contribution in your lessons.

There are excellent relationships between yourselves and your teachers. You are well supported by your teachers, both academically in your lessons and personally so that you are well prepared for the next stage of your lives. Your behaviour in classes and towards each other is exemplary. The curriculum provides you with some interesting courses and the one-year GCSE courses have particularly helped you to get an early taste of success.

Your college is extremely well led by your headteacher and his team of leaders who are determined to ensure that it provides the best for every one of you. Even outstanding schools have areas to work on. I have therefore asked your headteacher and senior staff to work on helping you to develop your skills of independent learning further so that all of your lessons are of the very highest quality. I have also asked your teachers in the sixth form to pay close attention to the progress that you are making so that all courses provide you with the best possible chance of success.

You can be proud to attend an outstanding school where everyone wants the best for you. I wish you all success in the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Rooks Heath College.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Riddiough
Her Majesty's Inspector

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