

Rutlish School

Watery Lane, Merton Park, London SW20 9AD

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

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

- The uncompromising leadership of the headteacher and his senior leaders has created a culture which is highly aspirational. Staff, pupils and governors are ambitious and committed to ensuring that the school provides an excellent education.
- Governors are exacting in their pursuit of excellence. They use their knowledge of the school and expertise to challenge and support leaders.
- For every year since the last inspection, progress in all years and in GCSE results has exceeded that seen nationally. In 2016, pupils' GCSE progress was again higher than the national average for the majority of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Leaders are rightly proud of the inclusive nature of the school. The personal development of the boys is as much a priority as academic excellence.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is outstanding and they set high expectations for pupils. As a result, skilfully planned activities and learning resources ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive support that enables them to achieve in line with other pupils. However, the analysis of this support is not yet sharp enough to determine which interventions make the most difference to pupils' progress.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and are very proud of their school. Their manners are impeccable; behaviour, both within classes and around school, is exemplary.
- Strong leadership defines the school. Boys from Year 7 onwards are encouraged to participate in leadership initiatives. Older pupils role-model their leadership skills for younger pupils.
- Despite a dip in the 2016 results, the sixth form is good and rapidly improving. Strong leadership and highly effective teaching are driving up students' achievements.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and governors ensure that procedures are in place to keep pupils safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen leaders' analysis of all support strategies to ensure rapid progress for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Continue to develop the quality of teaching in the sixth form to further improve outcomes for pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The focus of the headteacher and his leadership team is unrelenting on the performance of pupils. Standards have risen year-on-year since the last inspection. In terms of progress from starting points, the boys now far outperform boys nationally.
- A 'high performance' culture fills all aspects of the school. Leaders set high expectations for both staff and pupils.
- School leaders have ensured that good manners are integral to pupils' behaviour. Pupils' behaviour around school is exceptional and the atmosphere is calm.
- Senior leaders are assiduous in their tracking of pupils' progress; they use insightful interventions with skill and sensitivity to ensure that no student falls behind.
- The curriculum has a strong academic focus. However, where necessary, leaders skilfully adapt the curriculum in response to the needs of pupils who may benefit from studying vocational courses.
- Threaded through all the work of the school is the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils. Pupils and parents appreciate the breadth of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in sport, art, drama and music. Pupils demonstrate considerable knowledge and understanding of tolerance and democracy. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the challenges of life in modern Britain.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up premium, supports pupils in the classroom effectively, through the use of well-deployed learning support assistants. Access to specialist external agencies, as well as targeted support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are available through good use of appropriate funding.
- Staff are extremely proud to work at the school. They are well supported and trusted to be innovative in their teaching.
- In the Ofsted survey, parents were overwhelming in their support for the headteacher and his staff. One parent wrote, 'I cannot commend the school, head and teachers enough for their determination to offer a good education and to get the best out of the boys.'

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly ambitious for the school, providing razor-sharp challenge and support to the headteacher and his senior leadership team. As a result, governors and school leaders are relentless in their pursuit of improvement.
- Governors are skilled in their analysis of examination data. They demonstrate robust and nuanced questioning about the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is leading to improved analysis of support strategies.

- All members of the governing body link with a subject or specific area of the school. Minutes of meetings reflect close attention to safeguarding, including extremism and radicalisation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is strong. Policies and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. Staff records are accurate and up to date. All appropriate checks for staff have taken place and are recorded.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and are aware of how to raise any concerns, both within school and with external safeguarding agencies. Middle leaders have an in-depth knowledge of all pupils within their care. Where necessary, referrals to external agencies are made promptly and records demonstrating follow-up procedures are meticulously kept. The school provides useful information for parents on how to keep their children safe via the school website. Parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, said that their children feel safe at the school. School leaders ensure that procedures and personnel are in place to manage the safety of the site effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have expert subject knowledge. Activities focus on increasing the depth of pupils' knowledge and understanding, including for the most able. As a result, pupils make strong progress.
- Teachers' questioning is highly effective in maintaining strong progress. For example, in key stage 3 music and A-level history, inspectors observed highly skilled questioning that explored pupils' preconceptions and deepened their appreciation.
- Literacy across the curriculum has been a key focus of leaders' work. This is having the desired effect and pupils demonstrate an impressive use of technical language.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils very well. Their precise use of assessment data leads to incisive interventions to support pupils who are at risk of not making enough progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely. The focus on challenging texts has made a positive difference to the boys' progress and results in English. Reading clubs and adult volunteers provide support for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and commit to their work with enthusiasm. They arrive promptly to classes and settle to work quickly. Pupils' curiosity, encouraged by teachers, is a strong feature of learning. Pupils are confident in their questioning and will challenge their teacher appropriately if they identify a gap in their understanding. For example, in a Year 7 religious studies lesson, pupils were drawing parallels between Islam and Judaism and asking questions such as, 'What else can be kosher?'
- Teachers are consistent in their application of classroom routines, and so pupils benefit from the maximum amount of learning time. Work in the pupils' books demonstrates

that teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Students in a Year 13 German lesson conducted their learning entirely in German, demonstrating development of highly technical language skills.

- Regular assessment of pupils' work ensures that the most able pupils make strong progress. Effective support ensures that disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are able to make strong progress in line with their peers.
- In the sixth form, a strong focus on literacy runs through all subjects. As a result, students in the sixth form make more rapid progress in their extended writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly proud of their school and speak positively about the care, opportunities and support offered. A pupil reported to inspectors, 'This school has made me; I was shy and lacked aspiration in Year 7: now in Year 10 I am a confident student leader.' Student leadership opportunities from Year 7 to Year 13 enable pupils to be actively involved in all aspects of school development. For example, pupils use their media skills to deliver more interactive assemblies, informing their peers about aspects of the school's work, such as the focus on inclusion.
- Leaders have ensured that personal development has as much importance as academic success. All staff know the boys individually very well. They are able to identify the emotional and mental health needs of the boys and are clear about how to access support. There is a strong culture of referral to, and communication with, external agencies, ensuring effective and timely support for pupils.
- A small number of pupils attend a local provision for students with specific needs. Pupils make good progress because regular communication between the provider and the school ensures that the progress and welfare of these pupils are tightly monitored.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school, that bullying is rare and tackled firmly. Pupils are confident that they know to whom any concerns should be reported and that action by staff will be swift. Parents are in agreement that staff consistently 'go the extra mile' to support the boys. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe online and when out in their local community.
- Preparation for the next stages in education, training or employment is exceptionally strong. Careers guidance starts in Year 8; Year 9 pupils receive thorough guidance in their choice of GCSE study programmes. Year 11 pupils are aspirational for their futures, with many choosing to remain in the rapidly improving sixth form.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils are unfailingly polite and courteous. They demonstrate the utmost respect to staff, visitors and between themselves. Pupils are able to self-regulate their behaviour and the atmosphere around school is purposeful.
- Behaviour in classes is exemplary, allowing the maximum amount of time for learning and progress. Pupils say that school leaders manage behaviour well; inspectors agree. Staff set consistent and clear expectations in relation to behaviour and attitudes for learning.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. In 2016, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was lower than the national average. Staff have worked hard to improve the attendance for these groups of pupils; current data shows that rates of attendance are rising quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- In every year since the last inspection, pupils have made outstanding progress by the end of Year 11. Progress in English and history is above the national average and well above in mathematics, science, languages and geography.
- Pupils are assessed on entry to the school and leaders use this information to set challenging targets for all pupils. These targets, together with the precise monitoring of pupils' progress and support, ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Current assessment information shows that pupils in all years are making outstanding progress. During the inspection, pupils were able to articulate their knowledge and understanding with clarity and confidence. Challenge in classes is a constant, evident both in pupils' work and in class discussion.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made exceptional progress. However, in 2016, disadvantaged pupils made progress in line with the national average. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made less than national average progress. Current data shows that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making strong progress in English, mathematics and science.
- In 2016, the most able disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 made strong progress in English, languages and humanities. Their progress was not as strong in science and mathematics. The school's assessment information indicates that as a result of effective teaching most-able disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making rapid progress across all subjects.
- Outcomes for the sixth form have steadily improved over time. Following a dip in 2016 results, swift action by leaders has addressed variation in performance between subjects. The impact of this action is clear in students' work and is reflected in current data.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Through strong leadership, the attainment of students in the sixth form is rapidly improving. Examination results at both AS and A level were lower than expected in 2016, particularly for the most able and disadvantaged students. However, school data indicates that all students are now making good progress across a broad range of subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and students' written work in books is exemplary. The constant focus on literacy ensures that high-quality extended writing is the norm in all relevant subjects.
- The sixth form is combined with that of a local girls' school and students therefore benefit from a broader range of curriculum options and the opportunity to study in a mixed-gender setting. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and the teaching is strong. Students reported that this is a key reason why student recruitment into the sixth form and retention on courses are steadily improving.
- Students have an extensive enrichment programme. A thriving debating club tackles engaging themes, such as the image of Islam in popular culture. All students undertake a work-experience placement and are thoroughly prepared for their next steps into education, employment or training.
- A diverse enrichment programme prepares Year 12 and Year 13 students for university applications, as well as apprenticeship and employment opportunities. Students are highly aspirational and report that they receive excellent guidance in relation to university applications and future choice of careers. In 2016, all Year 13 students entered education, employment or training.

School details

Unique reference number	102679
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10023743

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 comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1261
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Norrie
Headteacher	Alex Williamson
Telephone number	020 8542 1212
Website	www.rutlish.merton.sch.uk
Email address	administration@rutlish.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 March 2013

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-size secondary comprehensive school for boys. The sixth form is a shared provision with a local girls' school, Ricards Lodge High School.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average. Around half of all pupils speak English as an additional language.

- A small number of pupils attend off-site provision at The Smart Centre, Merton.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects in all year groups, with the exception of Year 9, who were undertaking internal exams for the duration of the inspection.
- Pupils' work from a range of subjects was looked at.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Year 7 read.
- Inspectors observed behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime and spoke with pupils informally.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, heads of year, new staff, and a representative from Merton local authority.
- A range of documentation and policies was scrutinised, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plan, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and assessment information.
- Records, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding were reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 81 parent responses to Ofsted's online survey; 60 staff responses; and 57 responses from pupils.

Inspection team

Carolyn Dickinson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Matt Tiplin	Her Majesty's Inspector
Hayley Follett	Ofsted Inspector
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Sunday Ellis	Ofsted Inspector

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