

Eltham Hill School

Eltham Hill, London, SE9 5EE

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have the very highest expectations of how good the school can be and improvement has been rapid since the last inspection. Staff and students share these expectations and, as a result, students' achievement is outstanding.
- All groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, make rapid and sustained progress in a wide range of subjects in all key stages.
- The percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is much higher than the national average.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent and contribute greatly to their academic success. Students feel happy and safe at school and attendance is high.
- The governance of the school is a strength. The governing body supports the headteacher and senior leaders very effectively in their efforts to improve the school.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of students and plan lessons carefully to ensure that work is hard enough for students of all abilities. They mark work regularly and thoroughly.
- The school's curriculum is carefully tailored to meet the diverse interests and abilities of all groups of students and is designed to inspire them to do their very best.
- The new sixth form is good. It is popular, very well managed and offers a highly effective curriculum. Sixth form teaching is outstanding, and consequently students are making excellent progress in the vast majority of subjects.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported exceptionally well. The school offers students a rich variety of additional opportunities and activities which they appreciate greatly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 42 lessons, several of which were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also attended two tutor group sessions and an assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, heads of department, heads of year, several groups of students and a representative from the local authority. A meeting was also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documents including school policies, the school's own evaluation of its work, improvement plans and data about students' progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors discussed the lessons they had seen with senior leaders and looked at a range of students' work in lessons.
- Inspectors took into account the 62 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the 72 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Heather Leatt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Omar Ganie

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Eltham Hill School is smaller than the average comprehensive school. It has a mixed sixth form which opened in September 2013.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are high compared to national averages.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of service families, is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is similar to the national average. However, the proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- There are 14 students eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A very small number of Key Stage 4 students receive part of their education off site at Right Choice Project and Charlton Athletic Community Trust Youth, both situated in south east London.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further speed up the progress of students by ensuring that they always take note of the advice teachers give them on how best to improve their work, and that they respond effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is outstanding**

- The majority of students join the school with attainment in English and mathematics that is in line with the national average. All groups of students go on to achieve exceptionally well across a range of subjects and by the end of Year 11 the proportion gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is much higher than average.
- The progress of all groups of students, including the most able students, those from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language, is outstanding in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students' progress is especially impressive in English, where the students far exceeded the national expectations. The school's own records suggest that students will have done equally well in mathematics by the end of this academic year.
- The pupil premium funding is used extremely effectively to provide additional help for eligible students. Data show that gaps have closed rapidly between these students and their classmates. In 2013, they were less than a quarter of a GCSE grade behind other Year 11 students in English and half a grade behind them in mathematics. The school is forecasting that in 2014 these students will outperform their classmates in both subjects.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs also make outstanding progress. The school has highly effective strategies in place to support these students' particular learning needs and monitors their performance closely.
- Students supported by the Year 7 catch-up programme also achieve very well, making rapid progress in both literacy and numeracy through the use of well-planned, targeted support.
- The school has a successful strategy of entering students early for both GCSE English and mathematics. Those who gain a grade C or above can retake the examination in the summer of Year 11 in order to improve their grades. A small number who achieves the highest grades early in either subject goes on to study aspects of the relevant AS-level syllabus in preparation for their post-16 studies.
- The school places a very high priority on students continuing to develop their literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and supports them to do this well. Students enjoy reading for pleasure and are given opportunities to read a wide range of high quality texts in lessons.
- Students' progress in the newly opened sixth form is very good, according to data presented by the school. Students benefit from a well-planned and varied curriculum that is suited to their needs. The school expects this first cohort to do well in their AS-level examinations this summer, and the samples of students' work seen by inspectors support this view.
- Teachers carefully monitor the progress of the students who receive part of their education at Right Choice Project or Charlton Athletic Community Trust Youth, to ensure that these students achieve as well as they can. The progress of these students is very good.

The quality of teaching **is outstanding**

- Teaching is outstanding at all key stages, including in the sixth form. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge and expertise to challenge and inspire students of all abilities, including the most able students, to do their very best. They have high expectations of all students and are ambitious for their success.
- Good relationships between staff and students are a strong feature of the vast majority of lessons. Students thrive in an atmosphere of mutual respect, which makes a significant contribution to their very good learning and progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers understand the individual needs of disabled students, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. All these students benefit from teaching which is carefully planned to enable them to meet ambitious targets. They have access to tablet technology and other software, such as translation tools and voice activated software for those with dyslexia, which, together with the expert help of teaching assistants, greatly

enhances their learning. As a result, these groups of students make excellent progress.

- The teaching of English and mathematics is outstanding. The impressive progress students make in English supports their learning across all other subjects very well.
- Since the last inspection, the school has successfully introduced a new marking and assessment policy. Teachers now give students very clear advice about what they need to do to improve their work and meet their targets. However, students do not always take sufficient notice of their teachers' feedback and, therefore, miss the opportunity to make improvements that would help them to make more rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- The atmosphere in the school is harmonious, with students from very diverse backgrounds and different faiths mixing and working happily together. Students of all ages said they feel safe and happy in the school. This is reflected in the attendance figures which are higher than the national average for all groups of students and have risen steadily in recent years.
- Students are ambitious to do well and this is seen in their keenness to work hard. They work equally well on their own or in collaboration with their classmates and their eagerness to please their teachers makes a striking contribution to their progress. Disruption to lessons is very uncommon.
- The atmosphere in classes and around the school is calm and positive. The number of students who are excluded for a short amount of time has fallen rapidly in recent years. Students understand the school's behaviour policy and know it will be implemented rigorously by staff. They told inspectors that the system of sanctions and rewards works well and that staff apply it consistently. They were happy to talk about how much they enjoy school and their lessons.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students of all ages are well aware of the different forms of bullying, including racist, homophobic and cyber bullying, but said that it is very rare. This includes students at risk of not doing well. Students know exactly who to go to if they have any problems and are confident that teachers will deal with incidents effectively should they occur. The school's own records of such incidents support students' views, and data show that occurrences of this type have decreased markedly over time.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations through assemblies, the use of outside speakers and also through the school's personal, social and health education programme. They value the advice they are given on how to stay safe and healthy and said that they find it very useful. All groups said that they felt extremely well supported by their teachers.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs were full of praise for the support they receive from staff in the special educational needs department. They said they know that they can rely on staff in the unit for help at all times.
- The vast majority of parents and staff agree that students' behaviour is very good.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership. She encourages all staff in the school to take on responsibilities and to make improvement their highest priority. The school's own evaluation of its work and its improvement planning are of a very high quality and any weaknesses are addressed effectively. Leadership is outstanding at all levels. There is a shared commitment to achieving the very highest standards.
- The systems that senior leaders have put in place to monitor students' progress are impressively detailed, ensuring that teachers and governors receive accurate information regularly. Subject leaders and other middle leaders are knowledgeable and understand their areas of responsibility

very well. They know that senior leaders and governors will hold them firmly to account for the progress that their students make.

- The determination of the headteacher and senior leaders to challenge underachievement and to see standards continue to rise is demonstrated in the rapid and sustained progress of all groups of students. Better teaching has resulted in a steady improvement in GCSE results over a number of years.
- At the heart of the school is a vision of female excellence in education, modelled and promoted by the headteacher and her team of leaders. Together with the governors and staff, they tackle disadvantage, promote equality vigorously and strive to ensure that all students, no matter what their background, do the very best they can. The impact of the measures funded by the pupil premium is impressive and is seen in the rising attainment of eligible students.
- The school has organised a curriculum that suits the students' needs very well. It is designed with creativity at its centre and ensures that students develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their studies. As a result, they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education, or for training or employment, and they receive excellent guidance with regard to the choices they can make. The new sixth form offers a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications, including the International Baccalaureate, which has proved very popular. The sixth form is oversubscribed.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The curriculum has a global dimension, with Mandarin being taught from September 2014, and the school has applied for the International School Award. The school has a formal partnership with a large, local organisation to help students looking for work when they leave with curriculum vitae writing, interview practice and work experience placements. Students also benefit from a wide range of clubs and cultural visits, including trips abroad. This year, all Year 7 students have had the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument.
- There is a very effective professional training programme in place for staff, which is linked to their targets. All teachers are set targets for raising students' achievement.
- The school works well with the local authority, which provides a range of support. The local authority has every confidence that the headteacher and senior leaders will continue to improve the school.
- Safeguarding meets all statutory requirements, including for students who receive part of their education off site.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are knowledgeable and well informed and effectively hold the headteacher and the senior leadership team to account. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and are not afraid to ask searching questions of the data and information the school provides them with. They have regular meetings with subject leaders so that they can check the quality of teaching and monitor the progress of groups of students. As a result, governors know how good the quality of teaching is overall. They have supported the headteacher when it has been necessary to tackle underperformance and they ensure that the school's pay policy is clearly linked to the quality of teaching.
 - The governors are well equipped to carry out their statutory duties, including those of safeguarding. Their financial management is strong and they have ensured that the pupil premium funding has been used effectively to speed up the progress of eligible students. They also have a good knowledge of a range of data, which they use very effectively to compare the school's performance with that of other schools. They attend regular governor training provided by the local authority to ensure that they keep their expertise up to date.

What inspection judgements mean

School

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100182
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	430632

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	826
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Fordham
Headteacher	Madeleine Griffin
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 January 2012
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