

Sandhurst School

Owlsmoor Road, Owlsmoor, Sandhurst, GU47 0SD

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress in mathematics and English and achieve standards which are above the national average. Their literacy skills are developed well across different subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers know their subjects well and convey high expectations to their students.
- The behaviour of students is good. They show high levels of maturity both in lessons and around the school. Students say they feel safe and the school has robust systems to support all students.
- Exceptional additional opportunities are offered to students and these promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Although there have been improvements in some subjects, particularly for the most able, a number of students have not made the progress they are capable of. Leaders are rapidly addressing this to make sure that all students achieve well.
- The leadership and management of the school are good. The wider leadership team shares the headteacher's ambitious vision for the school.
- The governing body is good. It holds the school to account, has a secure knowledge of its strengths and weakness and provides very good support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent in some subjects. In some lessons students are not given enough feedback on how they can improve their work.
- There is some variation in the achievement of students in the sixth form, particularly in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 34 lessons of which seven were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and middle managers, governors, a representative from the local authority, and five groups of students.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information on students’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers, including 34 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, the school’s own survey of parents’ views and staff surveys.
- Inspectors looked at samples of students’ work across age and ability groups.

Inspection team

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Additional Inspector

Helen Blanchard

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Shahnaz Maqsood

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Full report

Information about this school

- Sandhurst School is an average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The main minority ethnic group is Nepali. The proportion who speaks English as an additional language is slightly above average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and students with a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A small number of Year 11 students attend part- or full-time alternative provision at Bracknell and Wokingham College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school works closely with the local authority and local schools in networks and joint training.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the rate of students' progress through increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring:
 - that the features of the best teaching and learning are shared swiftly among teaching staff to disseminate best practice
 - all teachers use the best feedback practice in order to consolidate the gains made in the students' progress.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - securing rapid improvement in achievement for all students in the sixth form.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average. The progress of the majority of students is good, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Students whose first language is Nepalese make very good progress. Achievement is not yet outstanding because progress for some students in the sixth form, although improving well, is below expectations.
- The progress of students in English and mathematics is good. The proportion of students leaving Year 11 with at least five good quality GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is above the national average.
- In English and mathematics the performance of students supported through pupil premium is not yet as high when compared with their peers. However, the gap is closing rapidly for both English and mathematics.
- Some students are entered early for mathematics in Year 11. The school monitors their progress carefully and they are given additional challenge, if they achieve their results early, by following a GCSE course in statistics.
- The achievement of the most able students is good. The school has correctly identified where the most able students in mathematics were not making fast enough progress and have taken steps to address this.
- Students who receive additional support from the Year 7 catch-up premium make good progress. This is due to the school's careful analysis of their needs and the targeting of appropriate support to ensure they reach their full potential.
- Students' progress in the sixth form is improving well in most subjects. Students achieve well in vocational subjects and achievement is improving for the most able students. In the past there has been some variability in standards in AS levels, particularly in mathematics. The school is successfully addressing this as a matter of urgency by improving teaching. It has also improved the monitoring of students' progress and attendance which is also beginning to have a positive impact on achievement.
- Those students who attend alternative college provision make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good in most subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and teachers are adept at using different approaches to make learning interesting and memorable. For example, in science, drama and religious education (RE) lessons students made outstanding progress because of the teachers' very high expectations and enthusiasm for the subject. They engage and involve students through tasks which are challenging and meet their needs. Teaching is not yet outstanding because aspects of high quality feedback are not used in all subjects.
- Much of teachers' questioning is good as it extends students' thinking and enables students to consolidate their learning. In many lessons, teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question students in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning. Students are given chances to use the skills they have learnt and to work together. Good examples of this were seen in English, food technology, music and history lessons.
- Literacy is taught well across the curriculum and is a strength of the school. There are good examples of appropriate terminology in speaking and listening and writing in science, music and drama. Students are encouraged to read widely, and often, and this is supported through excellent provision from library staff.
- Numeracy across the curriculum is being developed through additional activities during tutorials.
- A minority of lessons require improvement. In these lessons teachers do not always make sure that all students are clear about what they are learning. They do not always ask enough

questions to challenge students' thinking or expect students to ask good questions. In some lessons teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to share their work, including what went well and what could be improved.

- While many teachers provide helpful feedback on what students need to do to improve, this is not applied consistently across the whole school. Where there is high quality feedback it is accurate and helpful. However, written feedback does not always help students improve and, as a result, they do not make enough progress.
- Teaching assistants contribute to the learning for students who need additional support, including those with special needs. For example, they provide additional language resources to help these students engage with the curriculum. As a result, most make good and some make outstanding progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well around the school and attitudes to learning are good. The school has very good strategies for encouraging positive behaviour and respectful relationships. There were no exclusions in the last academic year. Attendance for all groups of students is higher than national and has improved in the sixth form. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because students do not always have opportunities to show their love of learning.
- Students are aware of how to keep safe and understand the different forms of bullying, such as racist and homophobic comments. Students say that incidents of bullying are rare and if they arise are dealt with swiftly. One student with special needs had prepared a presentation on bullying and this was shared with all tutor groups. Considerable effort has been made to make sure that students are aware of e-safety and cyber bullying.
- The attendance, safety and progress of students who attend Woking and Bracknell College are monitored closely and these students say they are very well supported.
- Conversations with students show that they value the school's care for their well-being. They value opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Sixth formers support younger students in tutor sessions, hear them read and act as mentors to them.
- Interviews with parents and those who completed Parent View agree that the school provides exceptional support for their children. Many commented on how well new students are made to feel welcome.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has been in post since 1 September 2013. Her focus on the school's priorities has already had impact. She has moved quickly to secure improvements, such as establishing tutor groups with students across year groups, to ensure there is additional focus on achievement and progress for all groups of students. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because the features of best teaching practice, particularly in written feedback, are not yet shared consistently across the school.
- Staff at all levels are committed to the school and its continued progress. The questionnaire responses were positive and many commented on the high quality support they receive from the headteacher.
- Tracking of students' progress means that resources are used to prevent underachievement. The school has a robust approach to performance management. Teachers are accountable for the progress of students they teach. They only receive salary increases when they meet their performance management targets, which are firmly linked to students' progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are rich opportunities both within subjects and through extra-curricular projects. For example, sixth formers met the Dalai Lama, students visit a Hindu temple and older students have the opportunity to visit Auschwitz.

- The school has developed links with Rwanda in a ground-breaking project which grew from the students' work on genocide. Students have raised money to pay for businesses and houses in the country and a group of students visits every other year. This aspect of the school's provision has been recognised nationally.
- There is an exceptional range of extra-curricular provision for students. Students appreciate the range of sporting and cultural opportunities available to them. For example, they spoke highly of a visit to the theatre, camping trips and music celebrations.
- The Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is used effectively for one-to-one tuition, booster clubs, after school clubs, school visits and additional learning assistants. As a result these pupils are achieving well.
- The inspection found that school's checks of its own performance are accurate, and it sets itself ambitious targets to secure outstanding practice.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement. Newly appointed leaders share the vision of the new headteacher and are focused on sustaining the recent improvements. As a result, achievement for students is improving. The school is aware that this needs to be consolidated so that students in all subjects reach their potential, particularly in mathematics.
- Safeguarding meets current requirements.
- The local authority works closely and effectively with the school, including the placement of students being transferred from other schools and additional support to secure improvements in the sixth form.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is good. Governors receive high-quality information about the achievement of students and the quality of teaching. They understand how the performance of the school compares with other schools nationally and have made sure that robust structures are in place to ensure that the quality of teaching is linked to salary progression. They know how the additional Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is spent and evaluate the impact of this on the progress for these students. The governing body ensures that all its statutory obligations, including for safeguarding students, are met.

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	110068
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	426539

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	960
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Edwards
Headteacher	Debbie Smith
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 October 2011
Telephone number	01344 775678
Fax number	01344 771575
Email address	head@sandhurst.bracknell-forest.sch

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