

Regents Park Community College

King Edward Avenue, Shirley, Southampton, SO16 4GW

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and managers provide strong and effective leadership, including in crucial areas such as teaching and the management of students' behaviour. This has led to rapid improvements since the last inspection, and provides persuasive evidence of the school's capacity to go further.
- Governors have a secure grasp of how the school is performing, and of what still needs to improve for it to become outstanding.
- Good teaching results in students achieving well in a wide range of subjects and enjoying their learning. Disadvantaged students make good progress, as do those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Good procedures for ensuring students are kept safe mean they feel well cared for. The good behaviour of the great majority of students in lessons and around the site reflects a renewed sense of pride in their school.
- The good curriculum is tailored thoughtfully by school leaders to meet students' varied needs and prepare students as balanced and mature young people when they leave.
- Staff support for vulnerable students and those who find it difficult to behave or attend well is a strength of the school.
- The school's atmosphere and ethos for learning have changed markedly since the last inspection, and students were at pains to report how much things have moved on.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that in lessons students understand the concepts and ideas they are learning about deeply enough so they can apply them to their own work.
- Subject leaders are not all equally effective at developing the quality of teaching in their areas.
- A small minority of students are not good enough at managing their own behaviour in lessons and around the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, over half seen jointly with senior leaders from the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, staff, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB). Informal discussions were held with students around the site and during tutor periods. An assembly was observed.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted’s on-line Parent View website for these to be considered, but account was taken of responses to the school’s own parent survey completed by over 200 parents at academic review meetings.
- Inspectors analysed documents including the school improvement plan and evaluation, the monitoring of teaching, data concerning students’ academic progress and behaviour, files showing the support provided for vulnerable students, and records of incidents.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Margaret Faulk

Additional Inspector

Mary Hoather

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- When the school was last subject to a full inspection it was placed in special measures.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The executive headteacher joined shortly after the last inspection. She is a National Leader of Education and also headteacher of another local school, Bitterne Park, with which Regents Park collaborates in areas such as staff development. The school is led on a day-to-day basis by a head of school.
- The governing body was replaced after the last inspection by an Interim Executive Board.
- About a third of students are of minority ethnic heritage, which is above average. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and students from service families, is above average.
- An above average proportion of students is disabled or has special educational needs and is supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students study vocational courses at City College, Southampton.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that, in all lessons, teachers thoroughly develop students' understanding of the key ideas which underpin their learning, and of how to apply these in their own work.
- Improve the consistency with which subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and bring about improvement where required, so achievement is equally strong in all subjects.
- Enable all students to take full responsibility for behaving well at all times in lessons and around the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and the head of school have transformed the leadership team to one with a strong focus on improving teaching. Together they are a determined group, leading a staff whose morale is buoyant, and a school with a good ethos for learning and high expectations for students' achievement.
- Following the last inspection, a period of support from Bitterne Park and the appointment of the executive headteacher were vital in moving things forward. Regents Park now has embedded and effective systems for monitoring teaching and for staff development. Work with Bitterne Park continues, but as partners, in areas such as curriculum development and teaching.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and linked well to its action plan so as to address areas requiring further improvement. Overall targets for students' achievement, and for different groups, are challenging. They reflect well the school's positive approach to securing equality of opportunity for all students and tackling any discrimination.
- Middle leaders form an effective team overall. Significant advances since the last inspection now see year leaders contributing well to the achievement of their year groups through monitoring students' progress and intervening to support those falling behind.
- Most subject leaders are fully involved in improving outcomes in their subjects, having been given more responsibility and training to carry out their roles. However, not all demonstrate the ability to make the difference required, leading to some variability in students' achievement between subjects.
- Leadership of support for disabled students and those with special educational needs is good. Provision is planned carefully, with good support and guidance provided for staff, and students' progress is checked closely.
- The curriculum is adapted well to students' needs and prepares students fully for life in the Britain of today. Different pathways are provided to offer the correct balance of academic, vocational, sporting and extra-curricular activities. Good advice is provided to students about career choices, and students were keen to point out the improvement here. The school is proactive in encouraging students to aim high, including those who have not considered university before, by linking with a local university.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in this ethnically diverse school, where displays reflecting students' varied ethnic heritage illustrate staff's determination that all are welcome.
- A member of staff accompanies students attending college so as to monitor their progress, attendance and behaviour carefully.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students fully meet requirements and are, rightly, a high priority for the school. Appropriate checks are made on staff suitability to work with young people, and child protection training and procedures are regularly updated.
- The local authority made a good move in brokering the link with Bitterne Park as a source of initial support and longer term partnership, and to set up the executive headship. The impact of its work has therefore been good. The authority has secure arrangements for monitoring the school's on-going progress.
- The school works effectively with parents to enable them to support their children's learning and to give their views through surveys, a parents' forum and a wide range of informal contact.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors maintain strong oversight of the school's performance via regular visits, analysis of student progress information and meetings with leaders and other staff to check their impact. They are well aware of the quality of teaching, the impact of professional development, and the way staff performance is linked to salary progression. They are a well-skilled team, with significant expertise in school governance coupled with good links to the local community. Their monitoring of the impact of resources is good, including of the pupil premium grant. This is making a good impact in the school, supporting the achievement of less privileged students. It is checked carefully by the governors in relation to the difference made by different areas of spending. The interim executive board is taking the right steps to reconstitute the full governing body.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. The school has a pleasant atmosphere for learning and visitors are made welcome. Students are well turned out and the site is tidy. Students note the sharp shift in attitudes to learning since the last inspection. The great majority approach learning positively and say this is

supported by the staff's firm, but fair, approach towards them.

- Most lessons proceed uninterrupted with students arriving punctually. Students respond well to staff instructions and to the systems for managing behaviour. Staff apply these consistently so students know where they stand, with a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Nevertheless, a small minority of students indulge in occasional low level disruption in lessons or are silly around the site. This lessens the pace of learning and undermines the good atmosphere prevalent in the school.
- The great majority of parents feel their children attend a school where behaviour is well managed and any concerns are dealt with quickly. There is very little bullying, and that which takes place is managed well by staff. Students are confident to talk to staff if they have any worries.
- The school works hard to support vulnerable students and those where there are issues over attendance. This has had a good impact and attendance is now above the national average. The high number of incidents of poor behaviour at the time of the last inspection has dramatically reduced. Very little learning time is lost, and the withdrawal of students from lessons is now rare.
- Good personal, social and health education via lessons, tutor time and assemblies ensures students get on well together and accept each other's differences, including in relation to sexuality and ethnicity. Students make a valuable contribution to the wider life of the school, for instance as prefects and by sitting on student councils. Year 11 students play a strong role in driving this work, evident in an impressively mature debate seen in a student meeting.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Training for staff is of good quality and they know what to do if they have concerns about safeguarding issues. The school responds correctly if these occur.
- There are good procedures for keeping the site secure, such as checking visitors and making sure access is monitored by staff. Staff supervision at break and lunchtimes is vigilant, but friendly. It is not unusual, for example, for senior staff to be out and about talking to students and, alongside their colleagues, setting the right tone through their discussions with them.
- Students receive good guidance about how to stay safe, including when using electronic communications. They know what to do if they encounter cyber bullying and how to be safe when online, due to the teaching they receive and reminders in assemblies and tutor groups.
- Students behave and attend well on college courses, and the school checks they are kept safe while there.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of what students will achieve. These are drawn from the school's overall approach to aiming high, and from much improved systems to track the progress of students and set them challenging targets in all subjects. This results in students making good progress in key areas of communication such as reading, literacy, and in mathematics. Work to support literacy in all subjects is more advanced than that for numeracy; a feature the school is appropriately focused on tackling.
- The majority of lessons have a clear purpose, which the students understand. Teachers' planning builds on what students already know, and addresses the students' varied levels of skills and understanding.
- Staff are enthusiastic and enjoy positive relationships with students. They ensure the pace for learning is good; effective questioning in most lessons is used successfully to check the progress of students and challenge them to go further. It is routine for there to be different levels of work provided, so students of differing ability are challenged to the right degree.
- The most effective teaching includes deep development, through discussion, of students' understanding of the lesson aims and the ideas which lie behind them. Staff then enable students to apply this to their own work, as evident in a drama lesson on the work of Bertolt Brecht, where his technique was thoroughly picked apart and used by students to support their own work.
- In a small proportion of lessons, more often in Key Stage 3, and in some parts of otherwise highly effective sessions, staff move the learning forward after discussion but without checking students have understood. In these circumstances, students typically continue working quietly, but are sometimes unclear what they are aiming to achieve. The pace of learning is reduced and some opportunities for developing speaking skills and student engagement are missed.
- Additional adults are deployed well in lessons, including to support students who are early stage learners of English. Provision for these students, and others with additional learning needs, has moved forward significantly. Good training and information for staff mean they are much more aware of how to support these students. Students arriving at the school with low levels of literacy or mathematics are enabled to catch up through additional support sessions. The impact of additional sessions, including those paid for

with pupil premium funding, is monitored carefully by leaders.

- Teachers use homework well, having made some adjustments over the last year to get the balance right across each week. Teachers' marking is regular and useful, with students usually adhering to the school's policy that they respond to it.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enjoy their learning, achieve well and make good progress in a broad range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Since the last inspection, results in GCSE examinations have risen sharply. The proportion gaining five GCSE grades at A* to C, including mathematics and English, is above the national average. From their different starting points, students make equally good progress.
- Achievement is strongest in English and mathematics due to the school's clear focus on getting the basics right. Students develop good literacy skills and enjoy reading. Analysis of library borrowing records shows that boys, who had been less keen readers, are now borrowing more books. Achievement is improving in other subjects, including science where attainment was low. Students' progress is not yet equally good across all areas of the curriculum.
- Students in receipt of free school meals make equally good progress to their peers in school, both overall and in English and mathematics, and better progress than students nationally. Their GCSE attainment was in line with students nationally in 2014, but around half a grade lower than others in the school. The progress of current students in receipt of free school meals shows the school is working effectively to narrow the gap further.
- The progress of the growing number of students with English as an additional language has accelerated quickly as the quality of support has improved. They make good progress from their starting points, and do particularly well in mathematics.
- More able students now make good progress, with more students exceeding the expected levels of progress in mathematics and English than are seen nationally. They are typically challenged well by teachers to achieve more in lessons and over time. They too are sometimes held back when their ideas are not developed well enough in lessons through discussion before they apply them to their work.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive and the careful monitoring of their progress. As with other students, their progress has improved since the last inspection, most notably in English and mathematics.
- Students attending the college achieve well in a range of vocational subjects, such as hair and beauty and motor mechanics. The school's good work in ensuring they attend underpins this success.
- Students do not enter early for examinations.

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	116450
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	446231

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
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	640
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Ian Fielder
Headteacher	Susan Trigger
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 July 2013
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