

# Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College

Neville Avenue, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 7BW

## Inspection dates

31 January – 1 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Leadership, including governance, is good and improving. Shared ambitions ensure that senior leaders and middle managers have high expectations for the school. As a result, student outcomes have improved continuously since the previous inspection.
- Students do well in their GCSE examinations, especially in science, humanities, languages and performing arts. The development of students' numeracy and literacy skills is particularly strong across the curriculum.
- All groups of students including disabled students, those with special educational needs, those supported by extra funds (the pupil premium) and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning.
- Teaching is good and improving. This has come about because of the relentless drive and determination of the headteacher who is very ably supported by senior leaders and the governing body.
- Students' behaviour is excellent as shown in high levels of concentration in lessons and in the way they take responsibility for their own learning. They show respect for staff, visitors and each other. Their attendance is good and exclusions are low.
- The sixth form is now good and examination results are rising. More effective leadership and management as well as improved strategies for recruitment and retention have ensured the necessary improvement since the previous inspection.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress for all students is not yet outstanding. There has been some variation in how quickly students make progress although the school is working successfully to address relative underperformance by middle attaining students.
- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. This is because feedback is not used consistently to help students improve and data are not used sufficiently to cater for the needs of every student in the class.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent over 22 hours observing 50 lessons taught by 49 teachers, of which 11 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks.
- Inspectors spoke to three groups of students and looked at samples of students' work, focusing on those in receipt of pupil premium funding as well as looking at the quality of marking and assessment.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- There were 225 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 52 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional responses and comments were received from parents and carers.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding documentation, minutes of governors' meetings and anonymised performance management records.

## Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional Inspector
Heather Leatt	Additional Inspector
Neil Gillespie	Additional Inspector
Raye Allison-Smith	Additional Inspector
Juliet Jaggs	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Blatchington Mill School and Sixth Form College is a well-above-average sized 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive school. The school has specialisms in performing arts, mathematics and computing, applied learning and gifted and talented.
- Approximately 78% of the students are White British with small numbers of students from European, Bangladeshi, Asian, African and Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action is also above national averages. All provision for students on alternative programmes is arranged by the school.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise students' attainment so they achieve better GCSE grades which are consistently and significantly above the national average in all subjects by:
  - ensuring that all teachers make better use of data to match more closely the needs of every student in the class
  - allowing students more opportunities to develop their answers and think more deeply about what they are learning
  - ensuring that students receive regular and helpful feedback on their written work in all subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school with attainment that is generally above national averages. Performance indicators for the period 2010 to 2012 show that, by the end of Year 11, attainment is above national averages with the proportion of students gaining the higher A\* to A GCSE grades significantly above. Attainment in the sixth form has risen considerably since the last inspection and is now in line with national averages.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics has continued to rise and is now average. Leaders and managers have been rigorous in tackling weaker teaching and managing changes in teaching staff. Literacy and numeracy are promoted very effectively across different subjects throughout the school.
- The proportions of students making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics compare favourably with national figures. The progress of students in science, humanities, languages and performing arts is a particular strength, although the school has recognised and is responding to the fact that the performance of middle attaining students is not as high as their peers. A very large majority of parents and carers agree that progress is good.
- Students' books confirm that students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress and achieve well. These students have GCSE average points scores equivalent to one grade below their peers but this reflects their attainment on entry with the gap narrowing as funding is used astutely to support their learning and track their progress.
- Similarly, disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because the school supports their learning very effectively, for example through the alternative provision offered by the school and the extensive support offered in the classroom by teachers and support staff who are well aware of students' individual needs. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, also achieve well.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form in the broad range of subjects offered by the school. Progress is similar to national averages but better in vocational subjects especially those supported by the school's specialist subjects. The progress of sixth-form students is carefully monitored and support is quickly and effectively provided for any individual who is underachieving.
- Very few students are entered early for examinations although early entry is used appropriately in modern languages where students are placed on AS and A-level courses when they have met their target grades in their GCSE examinations.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection with much good and some outstanding teaching observed.
- Teachers plan lessons that build well on students' knowledge. They have high expectations of their students and encourage them to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups. As a result, relationships are supportive and this promotes students' learning very effectively. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, the teacher's strong subject knowledge, confident exposition and attention to common errors and misconceptions ensured that students were suitably focused and confidently prepared for their forthcoming assessment.
- A small minority of lessons still require improvement. In these lessons teachers do not make enough use of available data to match their teaching more closely to the needs of individual students in the class. In a few lessons, students spend too long listening to the teacher and have too few opportunities to develop their answers and think more deeply about what they are learning.
- The quality of assessment is variable across subjects and within subjects. Marking usually gives students clear guidance about what they need to do to improve but this is not always the case.

Even when marking is thorough, teachers do not always check to see if students are acting upon the advice given. Opportunities for self- and peer-assessment are often missed.

- Teachers work well with teaching assistants to provide extra help to those students who need it. Support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those identified as being gifted and talented is of very good quality. Students' progress is regularly checked and extra assistance provided when needed. As a result, these students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.
- Sixth form students demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning with study skills focused on developing their reflective and analytical skills. Students are confidently able to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to new learning and real-life contexts.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Students' attitudes to learning are exemplary. In lessons they are attentive, self-disciplined and sustain concentration. Their behaviour outside of lessons is excellent, especially along the narrow corridors during lesson changes. Behaviour seen during the inspection is typical of behaviour over time.
- Parents' and carers' responses to Parent View and to the school's internal surveys demonstrate that the vast majority believe students are kept safe in school. Inspectors agreed with this view and members of staff expressed no concerns whatsoever about the conduct of students.
- Students are well aware of the different forms that bullying can take and say that it is rare. Students were confident that any incidents of bullying reported would be dealt with efficiently and effectively. This included cyber bullying and the misuse of social networking sites.
- Relationships between staff and students are very positive and supportive. Staff have received suitable training in managing students' behaviour. As a result, their approaches are consistent, proportionate and effective. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare with a range of interventions strategies to ensure that no students are permanently excluded.
- Attendance is improving and the proportion of students who are often absent is reducing. Attendance in the sixth form is rising rapidly so that attendance figures across the school are now above national averages.
- Assemblies, tutor time and the school's programme of personal, social and health education all contribute very well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students have a clear understanding of right and wrong and the school pursues ambitious equalities strategies, for example in its work on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues which is externally recognised as an example of best practice.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has been relentless in driving up standards and challenging underachievement in the school. Leaders focus tirelessly on improving teaching and learning and provide focused professional development for all teaching staff.
- All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, are highly ambitious for the success of students and have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school which are being addressed with vigour and determination. They work hard to ensure all students are treated equally and that there is no discrimination.
- School improvement targets are challenging and the school compares its performance carefully with national and local benchmarks. The senior leadership team has been remodelled to focus on school development priorities, with budget planning also carefully linked to these priorities.
- A robust performance management system, linked to salary progression, identifies those teachers who are consistently highly effective in their teaching. This encourages, challenges and supports teachers' improvement so that the proportion of good and outstanding teaching has

improved since the previous inspection.

- Expectations are high. The school is not complacent and recognises areas for improvement. For example, the relative underperformance of middle attainers is being tackled decisively and gaps between the achievement of students who are supported by the pupil premium and their peers are now narrowing.
  - The school's curriculum takes good account of students' aspirations and needs. Academic and vocational courses provide breadth, especially in the sixth form where these are well matched to further education or employment and training. Alternative provision, mainly through off-site courses organised by the school and supported by the applied learning specialism, supports vulnerable students particularly well. Enrichment and extra-curricular activities are extensive and very well attended.
  - The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and all staff have received suitable training in safeguarding and child protection.
  - Parents' and carers' responses to Parent View are very largely positive and a large majority of parents and carers have confidence in the school although a very small minority do not.
  - The local authority expresses confidence in the school and provides appropriate advice in terms of disabled students and those with special educational needs and support for governor training.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Representation on the governing body is extensive including student governors who take an active role. Governors take a strategic approach and support and challenge the school effectively. They actively monitor the work of the school through studying performance data, regular visits and frequent updates from the headteacher. Training for governors has helped them to do this. They are aware that both achievement and the quality of teaching are improving and take this into account when agreeing pay scale progression for teachers. Governors have a good awareness of how pupil premium funding has been used to support smaller class sizes and personalised tuition, and what difference this funding has made.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114606
<b>Local authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	401453

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1660
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jenny Barnard-Langston
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Felkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 – 4 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 736244
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 739615
<b>Email address</b>	office@blatchingtonmill.org.uk



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