

Patcham High School

Ladies Mile Road, Brighton, BN1 8PB

Inspection dates

27–28 February 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.

- This is a rapidly improving school which increasingly meets the needs of all its students. It is very well led and managed with strong governance.
- There is an impressive range of support, courses and opportunities for students.
- Students now achieve well, gaining GCSE results in line with national averages and, in some subjects, notably English, well above them.
- The school's strong focus on literacy is helping prepare students for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is now good, with some outstanding practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use an impressive range of strategies to motivate and engage students.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well. Exclusions have reduced dramatically and attendance is much improved.
- Students are tolerant, work together happily and understand the needs of others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' marking does not always show students how to improve their work.
- The professional development of staff does not sufficiently recognise their individual needs, as identified through performance management.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 40 lessons taught by 39 teachers. Five of these were joint observations with members of the school's senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with students, two representatives of the local authority, three members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the school's own parent and student surveys, the 113 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the 50 responses to the staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including students' work, current student assessment information, the improvement plans and the school's evaluation of how well it is doing.

Inspection team

Mary Hoather, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Roche	Additional Inspector
Stephen Williams	Additional Inspector
Sean Thornton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Patcham High is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is above average.
- The large majority of students are of White British heritage, with a low proportion speaking English as an additional language.
- Nearly a quarter of all students have special educational needs or are disabled. The proportion of those who are supported by school action is well above average. The proportion of those at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is nearly twice the average. Many of these students have emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- About 40 Key Stage 4 students attend City College or Plumpton College for one day a week to follow vocational courses.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has an arts specialism focusing on English, art and media. It was awarded Artsmark Gold for the third time in 2012 and was among the top 10% of most-improved schools nationally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers mark students' work regularly, using a consistent approach to feedback, so that students understand:
 - the specific things they need to do to improve
 - how these things relate to their individual target levels and grades.
- Link the professional development of staff more closely to their individual needs, as identified through performance management.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress from starting points which have traditionally been significantly below average. As a result of the skilled teaching and well-targeted additional support for those that need it, students achieved GCSE results in 2012 in line with national averages.
- Students' levels of attainment on entry are rising. Students now in Year 10 and those below them in Key Stage 3 entered the school with average levels of attainment. The achievement of these students is higher than average.
- Standards are consistently above average in English. This has been helped by the good range of literacy initiatives in place. The school has a 15-minute reading period each day for all students known as DEAR (Drop Everything And Read), recognised locally and nationally for its success. This has encouraged students to read more widely, talk about their books and write about them in the school magazine.
- As a result of improved teaching and changes to science courses, students' current achievement in mathematics and science is catching up with their achievement in English. Students also do well in art, French and sociology and in the vocational subjects offered at the two colleges.
- The school enters students early for mathematics but has now changed its policy to allow repeated entry because some students, including the most able, do not always meet their challenging targets.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support all eligible students. As a result, the progress for these students has improved, particularly in Key Stage 3. However, their average point scores remain below those of other students in both English and mathematics in Key Stage 4. Although this attainment gap narrowed in English in 2012, so that it was less than in mathematics, the gap has widened again for the current Year 11. At the same time, eligible pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved, to be in line with English.
- Because of good support, catch-up sessions and skilled teaching, in Key Stage 3 especially, disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View and the school's own survey expressed confidence in their children's progress. These views were substantiated by the inspection findings.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice. Inspectors saw teaching that at times was quite inspirational.
- Teachers use information about students well to plan lessons. As a result, most lessons meet the needs of all students and contain an enjoyable range of activities and appropriate support materials.
- Many subject teachers are encouraging 'learning talk' which helps students to speak confidently and more articulately. There is an impressive range of literacy support for targeted students, including reading and spelling workshops and a project with a digital media company which supports the development of students' communication skills.
- Lessons move at a good pace and most teachers are skilful at checking learning throughout the lesson. Students are generally actively engaged with the teaching. They were frequently observed working in groups or pairs, contributing well to class discussions or responding intelligently to the teachers' well-directed questions.
- In the best lessons, teachers are flexible, responding well to students' questions and acknowledging their views at every stage. Teachers also challenge students to extend their answers and use probing questions to deepen students' understanding. As a result, students may reach exceptional levels for their age or in relation to their sometimes very challenging needs.
- Students understand how well they are doing and know their target levels and grades. During

lessons, teachers' verbal feedback helps them understand what they need to do next to improve. Some teachers, particularly in English and French, also mark work regularly with very clear and detailed advice in relation to target levels and grades. However, this good practice is not consistently applied in all subjects, which is why teaching is not outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students show a positive attitude to learning and behave well in lessons and when taught off-site. They feel confident, safe and respected in school and know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of contexts. They find their teachers and the other adults supportive and approachable, which helps them to learn and progress well.
- Students' movement around the school can sometimes be boisterous, and was particularly difficult at the time of inspection because of building works.
- Parents are becoming increasingly confident about behaviour in school with far fewer now expressing concerns than in the 2012 school survey.
- Students are aware of the different forms of bullying and say that the school takes the issue of bullying very seriously. As one student said, 'This is a zero-tolerance school as far as homophobic bullying is concerned.' The effective way the school has dealt with bullying through a range of strategies, including restorative justice, is reflected in the significant reduction of bullying incidents. Such incidents are now rare.
- Good use is made of systems to manage students' behaviour. Rewards are given for good behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Year 11 students make responsible use of their off-site passes at lunchtime. The impact of these measures, alongside improved teaching, is apparent in the dramatic reduction in fixed-term exclusions.
- Attendance has improved from well below average three years ago to average. A dedicated staff team has dramatically improved the attendance of those students who were persistently absent. The school is working on improving students' punctuality which is not as good as it should be and is one reason why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Older students are very clear that behaviour in school is much improved and that this improvement has been accompanied by good individual support. As one Year 11 girl told an inspector, 'Patcham has done wonders for me.'

The leadership and management are good

- The school is very well led and managed. It is ambitious for its students. Through the conviction that all can achieve, regardless of ability or circumstance, it is living out daily its own motto of 'INSPIRE' and promoting equality of opportunity in all that it does.
- Through effective appointments, the careful deployment of advanced skills teachers, leadership development programmes and good continuing development for all staff, the headteacher and governors have built a skilled staff team which is now successfully raising the achievement of all students.
- The tracking of the progress of all groups of students is highly effective, enabling all leaders to focus challenge and support for students as needed.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. All subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching as part of their regular 'learning walks'. Teachers work together to improve their practice in an extensive range of groups and training opportunities. Students have a respected voice in shaping teaching in the innovative learning partnerships led by the advanced skills teachers and newly qualified staff are well supported. However, the professional development of staff is not yet matched closely enough to their individual needs, as identified through performance management.
- Well-developed and robust systems are in place to enable leaders to monitor and evaluate accurately the school's performance and to manage the performance of teachers and other staff. The roles of senior and middle leaders in these processes are very clear and middle leaders are beginning to hold their teams to account.
- The performance management of teachers is robust. Targets are regularly monitored and linked to pay and progression; pay increases are not automatic.

- The outstanding range of subjects, courses and wider opportunities meets students' needs very well. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and improving, helped by the wealth of opportunities carefully structured across all subjects and through core provision such as life skills, advice and guidance and effective assembly time.
- Pupil premium funding has been used well to provide extra teaching time and smaller groups to support eligible students in English and mathematics. Some funding goes towards the literacy initiatives, support sessions after school and residential days away from school. Plans are in place to implement the new Year 7 catch-up premium funding.
- The school effectively monitors the safety and attendance of the students who attend college courses.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this effective school mainly in personnel matters and through the funding of local partnerships.
- The school has worked very well with parents to gain their confidence and support. The school's use of its website for this is innovative. The headteacher's and governors' blogs are welcoming, open and honest and the website contains a wealth of information for parents about how they can support their children in their learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of this school is outstanding. The governing body is well informed and involved in the school, not least through regular governor days. Governors are skilled, have a very good grasp of all the information about students' achievement and are clear about where teaching is most effective and where it still has weaknesses. They know how the school compares with similar schools nationally and the stage it is at in its improvement. With external support, governors regularly review the performance of the headteacher, and they have a clear view of the pay and performance of all staff. They effectively monitor the use of the pupil premium. Governors receive regular training and have worked closely with the headteacher over the past four years to bring about a balanced budget and help work through the extensive staff restructuring this has necessitated. Governors successfully ensure that the systems to keep students safe meet the government's safeguarding requirements.

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	114608
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	405526

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	994
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Edwards
Headteacher	Paula Sargent
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 September 2010
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