

Rugby High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125769
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	328399
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ahson Mohammed AI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School (total)	746
Sixth form	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Reaney
Headteacher	Charlotte Marten
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 February 2006
School address	Longrood Road Rugby Warwickshire CV22 7RE
Telephone number	01788 810518
Fax number	01788 811794

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rugby High is an oversubscribed school. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. Around 12% of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is lower than the national average. The proportions of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are eligible for free school meals are both well below national averages. The school was awarded specialist status in science in 2004 and gained a second specialism in 2008 as a language college.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Rugby High School is a high performing specialist school that provides an excellent education. The students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is consistently in the top 5% of schools nationally. The standards reached in the sixth form are well above average. Students develop into confident, articulate and mature young people because of the many and varied opportunities they are given to learn and contribute both to their school and the local community. Their behaviour is exemplary. Attendance is excellent. Relationships between the different groups of students are harmonious. An overwhelming majority of parents agree with our judgements in this report. 'Rugby High is an outstanding school,' was one of the many glowing endorsements.

Students enter the school with high levels of ability. They continue to make very good progress and attain high standards as they progress through the school. This is because they are taught very well, and consequently they are very well motivated to learn. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The school's specialist status in science has raised the profile of this subject so that a significant proportion of students now study science at advanced level. The curriculum is reviewed constantly to ensure that it meets students' needs and interests. Students are prepared very well for the next stage of their education and the future world of work.

Leadership and management, including that of the sixth form, are outstanding. The experienced and efficient leadership team share a common focus. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are embedded well into the culture of the school and are underpinned by a strong drive to raise standards even further. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are in place and being developed. However, the school does not yet analyse outcomes sufficiently regularly to ascertain fully how different groups are doing during the year. Staff development needs are well met and this is reflected in the high quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

The school is not complacent about its success. It provides excellent value for money and has an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Standards are high and students make outstanding progress across a wide range of advanced level courses in this popular sixth form. In 2008, more students in Year 13 attained the top A and B grades than ever before. Overall, teaching is outstanding. Students are given considerable responsibility for their own learning while also being encouraged to collaborate with each other. They thrive on this approach, and in an atmosphere where learning is taken seriously and is coupled with enjoyment. In the few lessons that do not offer the stimulation to generate the very best achievement, girls still do well. When new students begin their courses in Year 12, they respond well to the high expectations. They soon know what they need to do to improve because they receive outstanding personal and academic guidance. Challenging targets are set. This foundation year sets them in good stead for their studies in Year

13. Arrangements to help students settle into the sixth form are very good, and so is the collaboration with the local boys' grammar school in providing a wide range of options and courses. The outstanding range of school-based extra-curricular activities, together with extensive trips both at home and abroad, is a strong feature. Sixth form students are an integral part of the school and embrace enthusiastically the many extended curricular and leadership responsibilities offered to them. This contributes to their outstanding personal development and well-being and excellent relationships between students and staff. Students appreciate being treated as sensible, young adults and respond accordingly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all members of staff make good use of assessment information to review and adjust students' targets throughout the year.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are well above average and progress is outstanding. Students leave the school having attained high grades at GCSE and A level. Some perform exceptionally well; for example, in 2008, six students achieved at least 10 A* subjects in GCSE and one student ranked in the top five nationally in two subjects. Standards in science are consistently high year on year, and reflect the impact of the school's specialist status. Due to its high performance, the school was awarded a second specialism for languages in April 2008.

Students are selected on their prior attainment. Standards on entry in Year 7 are well above the national average. Predictions from these entry standards reveal the potential for excellent results in Year 9. This potential is realised at the end of Key Stage 3, where standards are well above the national average. There are no significant differences across the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and the achievement and progress of different groups of students are broadly similar.

Throughout the school, where students are asked to prepare oral and written contributions for lessons, they demonstrate exceptional skills in engaging in high-level debate and investigation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary. Their positive and respectful attitudes to their peers and to adults contribute greatly to their school experience. Attendance is consistently high and they enjoy school immensely. They themselves say they 'really enjoy learning' and that the school has an 'encouraging atmosphere and is really friendly'. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Students are very well supported academically and pastorally. They feel safe in school, and are aware of issues such as using the internet safely. They are also acutely aware of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and taking physical exercise. They make positive contributions to the school and local community in numerous ways. Each form take responsibility for two stands at the annual Christmas Fayre, which raises money for charity. Students are also good at helping each other and responding to individual students' needs. For example, additional support for younger students is available via 'Offload', which is a peer counselling service run by students in Year 12 and Year 13. The skills that contribute to their future economic well-being are very well developed. They demonstrate quiet confidence, which sets them in very good stead for the next stage of their education and the future world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is a clear strength of the school and contributes significantly to students' outstanding progress. Good planning, with relevant objectives and clear outcomes, helps to ensure that students know the purpose of each lesson and what the expectations are. In most lessons, enthusiastic teachers who possess good subject knowledge engage students fully with relevant activities, which are delivered at a brisk pace. Knowledge and understanding are therefore acquired quickly. Many students demonstrate an exceptional ability to articulate strong balanced arguments in response to high quality questioning skills by their teachers. In the small minority of lessons where students are not sufficiently involved in their learning or where the teacher talking dominates the lesson, progress – especially that of higher attaining pupils – is less evident.

Teachers make good use of the school's periodic assessment information to set challenging learning goals and to monitor students' progress. However, details from ongoing assessments are not available regularly enough to refine targets during the year. Nevertheless, students say that they are confident in knowing how they can improve their work in order to achieve their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Students enjoy the challenge of an outstanding curriculum that caters for the needs, interests and abilities of all learners. It offers a full range of subjects with an academic focus, and has an important impact on students' high achievement. In keeping with the school's science specialist status, all students have the opportunity to study separate sciences. Recently, its achievement of specialist language status also has ensured that up to three languages may be studied at Key Stage 3, and a compulsory language is studied at Key Stage 4. The curriculum is inclusive and the particular needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are a clear focus of planned provision. A strong emphasis is placed on personalising the curriculum for individual students who need additional support.

All around the school there are excellent examples of students' work and displays are of a high quality. These contribute significantly to students' enjoyment and sense of purpose.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Personalised learning is a strong feature of provision. Students receive excellent academic guidance and support. The quality of marking is consistently high, with teachers usually making it clear what the 'next steps' should be. Students who are struggling with their learning are identified early so that individualised support and counselling (including outside agencies where necessary) can be targeted to meet their needs and re-engage them with learning. Good strategies are in place to maintain high levels of attendance, including calling home on the first day of absence. The personal, social and health education programme is a particular strength of the school. It is very effective in encouraging the development of personal, learning and thinking skills, and the development of the emotional aspects of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. The leadership team provides clear direction and vision for the school. Management is highly effective. The leadership team is united in a common purpose to raise students' achievement further. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, most notably in addressing the monitoring of students' progress. The school's commitment to ensuring that all students have opportunities to encounter other communities and cultures is evident around the school. The achievements of the great majority of students by the time they leave school are a result of the drive and determination provided by senior leaders and governors. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous, detailed and accurate and identifies clearly the areas for further development. When an area is identified for improvement, it is addressed promptly and effectively. For example, the school is aware that better use could be made of assessment information to set targets and raise the performance of higher attaining students further, and is reviewing its procedures. Monitoring systems are in place and there are good levels of consistency in subject leadership. Leaders know where the strengths and areas for development lie because the school operates a rigorous programme for monitoring teaching and learning. A well-planned professional development programme of performance reviews and of the school's self-evaluation, based upon the outcomes of this monitoring, is available for all staff. Governance is very good. Governors are actively involved in the school and hold the senior team to account. They achieve the right balance between challenge and support.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B



28 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Rugby High School, Rugby, CV22 7RE

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you offered us when we inspected your school. We appreciated very much talking to you in your lessons, around school and in our meetings and this was very helpful. I would like to share with you what we agreed upon about your school.

Rugby High is an outstanding school where you say you are proud to belong. The leaders of the school are very committed to ensuring that you get the very best from the school. The school's leadership and management are outstanding, as are the curriculum and opportunities they provide for you. Very importantly, the way in which you develop personally within the school is outstanding. You demonstrate excellent behaviour and have formed very happy working relationships between yourselves and your teachers.

The school provides exceptional care, guidance and support and values you all highly as individuals. We heard through our discussions how you really feel part of the school and so you really enjoy your time at school.

Results in the GCSE examinations are exceptionally high, with all students gaining five or more GCSE passes including English and mathematics. You make outstanding progress because of the high quality of teaching you receive and your very positive attitudes to learning. We know how much you enjoy learning at Rugby High. To ensure this continues, we have asked the school to monitor your progress even more regularly in order to ensure that everyone is enabled to achieve their full potential. You can help by continuing to attend regularly and being proactive about your learning in lessons.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ahson Mohammed
Lead inspector