

CONTEXT

The Sixth Form has a highly inclusive ethos; its care, guidance and support are outstanding. The sixth form welcomes students from the full range of prior attainment, from other schools across and beyond the Borough.

Overall, students make excellent progress and achieve very well. This reflects the quality of teaching and the curriculum, both of which are consistently outstanding.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Head of Sixth Form is resilient, creative and determined. His focus on improvement is relentless and he is determined to secure quality first experiences (in and out of the classroom) for his students. He is supported by an outstanding team.

Systems for monitoring students' academic progress are strong, and improving. There are models of good and outstanding systems being used in departments and teachers are held to account for student progress.

Improvement planning is comprehensive and rigorous. It is matched well to priorities and based on good knowledge of performance. The targets for the Sixth Form are ambitious.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

Achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Almost all students successfully complete their A-level courses, enabling them to successfully move on to higher education or career options. The retention rate is 91.92%. Rigorous tracking arrangements are in place with support that is both timely and appropriate contributing to the strong success rate. All Sixth Form teachers and tutors have access to clear and forensic data to enable informed discussions to be undertaken regarding progress and attainment.

In AS Level the pass rate at A-E has been above the national level since 2005. The pass rate at AS Level at A-B has been consistently outstanding, however there was a slight drop in 2014 which the school has comprehensively addressed. In the 2014 examination series, 8 subjects achieved a pass rate of 100% and 20 subjects (out of 27) achieved pass rates higher than national averages.

At A Level the pass rate at A-E has been above national level since 2005 and the achievement of students was in line with previous years and in line with predictive data. The pass rate at A Level at A*-B has been consistently outstanding. In the 2014 examination series, 20 subjects (out of 27) achieved pass rates of 100% and this is outstanding. A considerable number of subjects also achieved outstanding results at the higher grades of A*-B.

Following a review of A Level examination performance in the Summer of 2014, clear action plans were initiated enabling close and careful monitoring of ongoing performance. This rigour is ensuring that the results in these areas will rise substantially this summer. There is excellent analysis of the performance of groups of students to identify any gaps or underachievement thereby ensuring that progress is rapid and sustained.

There is a clear and detailed Sixth Form Improvement Plan which is ensuring that the school will reach its targets whilst continuing to improve the value-added score.

The recent introduction of MOOCS will enable all students to complete at least one recommended on-line course during the academic year. The courses provide stretch and challenge to students as well as developing their independent study skills. Students who were interviewed about the MOOCS spoke articulately and enthusiastically about the courses which they had so far undertaken.

BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY

Attendance is high. Attendance statistics indicate that it is above national figures and is consistently 96%.

Students enjoy their time at the sixth form enormously and display exemplary behaviour and attitudes to their work. Most students demonstrate impressive maturity and independent learning and study skills. Discussions with students demonstrated unanimous agreement that they feel safe, well cared for and know how well they are doing in their work. They rightly describe the sixth form as a happy and harmonious learning community where everyone is respected as an individual.

Students' outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes to learning contribute to their outstanding overall achievement. They have a mature and conscientious approach to their work and show very good levels of concentration in lessons. They take up opportunities for independent study in the various areas in the school as well as engaging positively with the recently introduced MOOCS

Views expressed by students across the sixth form were extremely positive and reflected their enjoyment: 'It's like a big family.' 'Teachers give a lot more than they need to.' 'This school is a community'. 'The Head of the Sixth Form has time for everyone'.

Students benefit from outstanding care, guidance and support. This promotes their confidence and high aspirations and they are enabled to make appropriate choices about their future.

Students are polite and courteous to staff and each other, and this has a very positive effect on learning. They learn and flourish in an atmosphere of respect and dignity. Sixth formers act as good role models and have opportunities to support the younger students by helping in lessons and acting as mentors.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching is outstanding, enabling students to make very good progress in lessons. Teachers have very good specialist subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. Relationships between staff and students are excellent and make a positive contribution to the quality of learning.

Effective questioning probes students' understanding of what they are learning and staff enable students to engage in extended discussion to deepen their thinking through well-developed explanations or evaluations.

In most lessons, students have a detailed awareness of their aspirational target grades, of the level they are currently performing at, and what they need to do to achieve a higher grade. They are able to engage in self- and peer-assessment to identify areas for improvement.

The sixth-form's curriculum provides a wide range of subjects. All groups of students have a very good range of opportunities to achieve their potential.

In the sixth form, most teachers act as facilitators to learning as they guide and question students. Thus, they make very good progress in broadening their thinking and in evaluating critically their work and the progress they are making.

The school is very active in advising students to select the most appropriate courses in the sixth form so that there is a very high completion rate in both Years 12 and 13. Predictions for the current year suggest that more students are on track to attain A* to B grades than in previous years and a major focus for the school is to enable even more students to gain the higher grades in all AS and A level subjects.