

Chichester High School For Girls

Inspection report

Unique reference number	126063
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381182
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2012
Lead inspector	Jacqueline White HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,273
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Elliott
Headteacher	Fiona Oliver-Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 May 2009
School address	Kingsham Road Chichester West Sussex PO19 8EB
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jacqueline White

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cynthia Millband

Additional inspector

Roger Parry

Additional inspector

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David Webster

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 48 lessons and teachers. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's performance data and other documents, including the school development plan, safeguarding and equality policies, and the minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors took account of any responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and analysed 116 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 142 completed by students.

Information about the school

Chichester High School for Girls is larger than the average-sized secondary and is a specialist arts and science college. Most students are White British with approximately 9% from minority ethnic groups. Very few students have a first language other than English and few are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average. Of these, most have learning difficulties or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The school is above the current government floor standard and has Artsmark Gold accreditation. It works closely with the boys' school that shares the same campus to provide joint sixth form provision.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This satisfactory school offers a broad curriculum that fosters creativity well. Generally, students make satisfactory progress. There has been some turbulence in staffing that has had an impact on students’ performance in mathematics and science. Stability has now been secured and achievement is rising in these areas. The school is focusing strongly and with growing success on accelerating the rate of students’ progress so that it is consistently good and they achieve well in all subjects. However, while reducing, there is still variation in students’ performance across subjects, including in the sixth form.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. Given their starting points students make satisfactory progress. Retention rates are high and students are very positive about their experiences; close relationships with staff that afford good levels of individual support and guidance are an important factor in their enjoyment of learning.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. There is a growing proportion of good or better teaching where students respond positively to teachers’ high expectations and well-planned lessons that are closely matched to their needs. These characteristics are not always evident and, consequently, there are lessons where students fail to produce their best work.
- Students from all backgrounds get along well together and feel safe. A revised behaviour management system is improving the climate for learning, with a dual focus on rewards and restorative justice. However, not all staff implement the new procedures well. Occasionally, and usually where teaching is not responsive to students’ needs, learning is interrupted by low-level disruption. Some parents and students rightly raise concerns about this. Students’ attendance has been below the national average for the last three years.
- New appointments and some restructuring have increased capacity within the senior leadership team. A number of key management systems have been reviewed and improved. The systematic approach to monitoring the quality of teaching is promoting improvement but is not sufficiently focused on students’ learning and progress. This is compounded by variation in the quality of middle leadership. The governing body supports the work of senior leaders well but

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has not always been proactive in holding them to account.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by continuing to reduce variation in students' performance across subjects. Give priority to ensuring:
 - leaders, particularly middle leaders, are strongly focused on, and equally expert in, evaluating the quality of learning in lessons
 - all teachers have high expectations and use assessment information to plan lessons that build systematically on students' prior attainment, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - students' progress in lessons is monitored closely by teachers so they move to higher levels of learning when they are ready, and any gaps in understanding or misconceptions are dealt with
 - the new strategies for behaviour management are implemented consistently.
- Improve students' attendance so that it is at least in line with national averages by February 2013 by:
 - detecting any deterioration in the good attendance of younger students and rectifying it swiftly on an individual basis
 - continuing to work closely with the families of students who are persistently absent, extending multi-agency approaches where necessary.
- Increase members of the governing body's capacity to be proactive in holding the school to account by further developing their skills in data analysis and ensuring they have a timely flow of comprehensive information about students' performance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The small proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel their children make good progress. Inspection evidence does not support this but clearly confirms that students make satisfactory progress. Most students join the school with average attainment and achieve GCSE results that are broadly in line with the national average. In the very recent past, there is evidence of underachievement in some subject areas. The school is tackling this and students now achieve satisfactorily. In the sixth form, many students start their courses with relatively low attainment. They are motivated and enthusiastic learners who make at least satisfactory progress as a result of effective support. Small group sizes mean that sixth formers receive high levels of one-to-one tuition.

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The progress of all students is monitored carefully. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported by interventions which enable them to make satisfactory progress. In particular, there has been an effective focus on improving underdeveloped reading skills. Teachers are aware of the range of additional needs that students in their classes may have but activities are not always sufficiently tailored for them. Communication, writing and reading skills are taught well across the school. The development of mathematical skills is satisfactory but not so consistently effective.

Students make the most progress in lessons where teachers will not compromise high expectations for work and behaviour, and plan engaging activities that require students to think for themselves and apply their learning independently. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson, students were grappling with the concept of inference. They worked in groups to identify examples in a range of texts that demonstrated different levels of subtlety. The teacher worked systematically with each of the groups, probing students' understanding and pushing the boundaries of their thinking with skilful questioning. Students were then required to construct examples of their own which were passed from group to group for explanation and evaluation. Students enjoyed the challenge of the task and benefited from well-developed discussion that extended their capacity to be critical thinkers, readers and writers.

The school provides a bright and welcoming learning environment for its students. The quality of some of the displays around the school is excellent. Learning is usually well supported by high quality resources, including good access to computers.

Quality of teaching

In their responses to the inspection questionnaire most parents and carers consider that their children are taught well. Teaching is satisfactory overall but variable in quality. The teaching observed ranged from outstanding to inadequate. In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations. They use a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning to plan and deliver lessons that challenge them. Stimulating activities, including opportunities for collaboration, engage students and require their participation. Assessment provides precise feedback about how students can improve their work. Learning is evaluated throughout lessons against clear, shared success criteria, with students assessing their own and others' work.

Where students' progress slows, teachers are not sufficiently 'tuned in' to their responses. They use methods that are often technically good but do not evaluate their impact on students' understanding. This is sometimes combined with a lack of vigilance in detecting off-task behaviours and a lack of rigour in asserting high standards.

In the most effective sixth form lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to inspire students. There are continual checks and challenging discussions to test

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and extend understanding. In an English literature lesson where students were discussing different forms of love and loss, the teacher's questioning was both open and precise, enabling students to relate their own experiences to those explored in literature. Progress was maximised by immediate, well-developed feedback that lifted students' thinking to a higher order. However, while mitigated by small group sizes, there are weaknesses in teaching, particularly in planning. In the majority of sixth form lessons observed, this amounted to little more than a list of tasks.

In many lessons, especially in visual and performing arts, there are good opportunities for students to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Consequently, most students are articulate and considerate and express their individuality confidently. They have every opportunity to explore their talents through the wide range of courses and extra-curricular activities that are available in all key stages. Students benefit from starting some of their GCSE courses in Year 9.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students, parents and carers say that a small number of students do not always behave well. The school has listened to and responded to these views by changing behaviour management strategies and systems. As a result, students are clearer about expectations and the relationship between effective learning and positive, cooperative attitudes. Teachers and other staff display consistently caring, supportive attitudes towards students. Overall, behaviour is typically satisfactory. Around the school it is often good; students are polite and safety-conscious. Nevertheless, low-level disruption in lessons has not been eradicated. Generally, the school deals with incidents of all types of bullying promptly and effectively. Mutual respect and consideration for others is central to the school's values and most strive to meet these expectations and understand the consequences of failure.

Students' attendance is below the national average. A raft of strategies to encourage good attendance combined with a more relentless and steely approach to dealing with persistent absence is beginning to close the gap but progress over time has been too slow.

Leadership and management

As a result of changes within the senior team and the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, the headteacher is able to take a more strategic view of the school's work. Consequently, the focus on raising students' achievement has intensified. Senior leaders work together cohesively, with gathering impact and the capacity to sustain improvements. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Their analysis of performance data is robust and drills down to the performance of individual students. The progress of individuals and groups of students is reviewed regularly and well-targeted interventions are in place to tackle any underachievement. Line- and performance-management procedures emphasise staff's accountability for students' progress. Regular lesson observations and scrutiny of students' work underpin the drive to improve teaching. Middle leaders are involved

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in these activities but some focus on teaching performance at the expense of the quality of students' learning. As a team, they are developing the skill of distilling information from monitoring into actions that will accelerate students' progress. Well-planned training is supporting this endeavour. The new head of the sixth form has high expectations and an ambitious vision of better outcomes for students. The impact of her work is already evident in deeper parental engagement and students' growing involvement in, and leadership of, school life.

The school's broad and inclusive curriculum gives all students the opportunity to develop their aptitudes. Any discrimination is tackled robustly. Safeguarding procedures, including child protection arrangements and staff checks, meet all current requirements. Links with other providers and agencies are well coordinated and effectively focused on improving provision and outcomes for students. The views of parents and carers are regularly sought. Channels of communication are varied, including email and access to a virtual learning environment that guides parents in how they can best support their children's learning. In addition, every student has a planner that serves as a useful point of home–school contact.

Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school's work. Their commitment to raising standards further is strong and they are taking concerted action with senior leaders to secure improvement. They have not always interrogated headline messages about students' performance with sufficient rigour or demanded updates about progress regularly enough. They are rightly intent on correcting this and developing the skills of data analysis to increase the level of challenge they offer to senior leaders.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



3 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Chichester High School for Girls, Chichester PO19 8EB

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited. We appreciated your willingness to talk openly about your work and life at the school.

Although most of you are now making satisfactory progress and your attainment is broadly average, there has been evidence of some underachievement in the recent past. You do not achieve equally well in all subjects, including in the sixth form. However, there are clear signs that aspects of the school's work are strengthening. Your achievement is rising, including in science and mathematics. You are responding well to the new behaviour management systems and your attendance is beginning to improve. Relationships throughout the school are generally positive but some of you rightly raise concerns about a small number of students who do not behave well. You told us that you usually enjoy learning and particularly like lessons that require you to participate and apply learning independently. You feel safe and valued as individuals. The curriculum offers a wide range of courses and you appreciate the many and varied extra-curricular activities. Students also enjoy their studies in the satisfactory sixth form and benefit from the high levels of individualised support.

Senior leaders are building on improvements. We have asked them to develop the effectiveness of middle leaders, focus on a number of strategies to ensure high quality teaching, and further improve your behaviour (this reflects the concerns that some of you expressed) and attendance. Members of the governing body are asked to undertake some actions that will help them increase the accountability of senior leaders. You can help by attending every day and by being positive about learning. Thank you again for your help during the inspection. On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline White
Her Majesty's Inspector

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