

Gosford Hill School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123241
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380629
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	John Daniell HMI

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	894
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Doreen Rose
Headteacher	Stephen Bizley
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 April 2009
School address	Oxford Road Kidlington Oxfordshire OX5 2NT
Telephone number	01865 374971
Fax number	01865 841029
Email address	office.4060@gosford-hill.oxon.sch.uk

Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	8–9 February 2012
Inspection number	380629



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

John Daniell

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ann Behan

Additional inspector

William Cassell

Additional inspector

Gordon Jackson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 35 parts of lessons taught by 35 teachers. Meetings were held with senior and middle school leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. A telephone conversation was also conducted with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's performance data, self-evaluation and school improvement documentation, records of lesson observations as well as policies. Inspectors scrutinised 103 questionnaires from parents and carers, 328 from students and 71 from members of staff.

Information about the school

Gosford Hill is smaller than the average-sized school and the number of students on roll has fallen over the past three years due to a drop in the birth rate. The majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion of those from minority ethnic groups. The school has a below-average proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below the national average. The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school holds specialist mathematics and computing status. It also gained a number of accreditations including Investors in People, the ICT Mark, Artsmark Silver and the International School Award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Gosford Hill is a good school. Students' achievement is good over time by the end of Key Stage 4 and current available data indicate that students' rate of progress is rapidly improving. There remain some gaps in achievement for disabled students and those with special educational needs, but these are narrowing. Students who speak English as an additional language make better progress than similar students nationally.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. The drop in the number of students on roll presents leaders with challenges, but they address these well and the picture is an increasingly positive one.
- The majority of teaching is good and better. There has been a significant increase in good teaching over time and satisfactory teachers have become good through the effective use of coaching. In the many effective lessons, teachers make good use of available information on the needs of students when planning lessons to secure good progress.
- Marking is regular and usually informative. However, in some subjects it remains inconsistent because some teachers are not informing students clearly enough as to how they can improve, in order for them to achieve and exceed their challenging targets.
- Good behaviour in lessons and around school is a strong feature of the school. Students' positive behaviour has enabled teachers to be more creative in lessons. Consequently, most students are fully engaged in their learning and relationships with teachers are strong. There is a correlation between weaker teaching and low-level disruptive behaviour in the classroom.
- Leaders and managers demonstrate a good understanding of school improvement strategies, and roles attributed to senior leaders play to strengths. Effective systems are in place to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the school. The school has correctly identified groups of students who perform less well than others and has implemented effective strategies to narrow any gaps in achievement.
- The curriculum has been modified to secure students' good progress across Key Stage 4. The school recognises a need to build more effective partnerships with

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

parents and carers, businesses and local community groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure outstanding achievement by:
 - ensuring a higher proportion of students achieve beyond expectation
 - coaching the good teachers to become outstanding in the classroom
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of marking across all subjects so that every student understands exactly what they have to do to move up to the next level of attainment
 - eliminating any existing low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons.

- Enrich the curriculum further by:
 - developing and building on existing partnerships with parents and carers, local businesses and community groups.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

There has been a rising trend in outcomes over time since the previous inspection. Although performance in some key measures dipped in 2010, attainment was just above the national average in 2011 for those students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics. The school has rightly focused on students who have lower levels of literacy and numeracy, and improved provision across the curriculum has led to a significant improvement in the rate of progress being made by students across all subject areas. The school's specialism has played a key role in developing students' numeracy skills.

Students' progress in lessons is at least good and this is contributing to the accelerated improvement in achievement. Most parents and carers rightly believe their children make good progress at the school. Current available data based on results already banked in English and mathematics indicate that attainment is set to rise further in 2012. In the majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate an accurate understanding of how students learn and make progress. In a good Year 7 German lesson based on describing their House Leaders, students were both challenged and supported through carefully prepared resources. They were regularly questioned about the strategies they were employing to learn, and there were frequent references to previous learning as well as to elements of literacy. Consequently, all students made good progress.

Although disabled students and those with special educational needs, as well as those students known to be eligible for free school meals, make slower progress than other groups of students in the school, these gaps in performance are narrowing. Staff make suitable adjustments to materials and activities so that they match their

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

needs. High levels of staffing enable students of varying abilities to make good progress, as a result of highly effective levels of care and one-to-one support they receive from teaching assistants. Students who speak English as an additional language make better progress than similar students nationally as a result of staff providing practical activities using pictures and books to help give clues for word recognition in role-play activities.

The sixth form secures satisfactory achievement, although students' rate of progress is steadily improving. Despite falling numbers in the sixth form, the school continues to provide a range of subjects, including further mathematics. Astute leadership of the sixth form is securing improving outcomes and plans are being considered to work with other schools' sixth forms. Staff in the sixth form care well for students and provide thoughtful guidance which is personalised to suit the needs of the individual student.

Quality of teaching

As a result of an improving profile of good and better teaching, students' outcomes are improving over time. No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection. Lessons are characterised by secure and enthusiastically communicated subject knowledge, high expectations and confident use of varied resources, including information and communication technology. Consequently, students demonstrate good behaviour built on positive relationships and a shared commitment to learning. They are regularly required to work in pairs and small groups and respond positively to activities planned by the teacher. In an outstanding history lesson, students in Year 8 discussed the causes of World War 1 with great enthusiasm. One stated, 'We really want to do well'. The work presented an appropriate level of challenge and an opportunity to reflect on moral issues associated with war. The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires spoke positively about the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning over time is a strength because they demonstrate a good awareness of the needs of different groups of students, and provide activities which deepen their understanding. In the few satisfactory lessons that remain, planning is less effective because teachers deliver the same lesson content to all in the class, and students do not engage fully. Consequently, low-level disruptive behaviour affects the rate of progress for some. The effective use of additional adults in the classroom secures positive outcomes for those students who require further support.

In most lessons, marking is regular and constructive, and provides useful feedback on how to move up to the next level. This good quality marking is, however, not consistently applied across all subject areas. Students generally respond well to comments made by teachers. They can speak about their own levels of attainment with confidence, and are presented with many opportunities in lessons to assess their own work and that of their peers.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects are taught effectively across the curriculum, so that students learn about tolerance and respect for other cultures and

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

religions, as well as having opportunities to reflect on issues such as the environment and human rights.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' good behaviour in lessons has been a determining factor in enabling teachers to deliver high quality lessons and students to make good progress. Although responses to the inspection questionnaires for students and for parents and carers raised some concern about disruptive behaviour, this was not supported by behaviour observed during the inspection or by the profile presented by external surveys conducted in recent years. Any low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons is readily dealt with by teachers, and the straightforward 'behaviour for learning' referral system is understood by all students. The school's zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour has resulted in a steady reduction of behavioural referrals and exclusions. Hence, teachers can focus on teaching and learning which secures clear gains in achievement. The school's refined behaviour tracking system permits leaders and managers to analyse behavioural trends by different student groups, so that appropriately well-targeted intervention strategies can be put in place.

Students report they feel safe in school and the school ensures students are able to respond positively to instances where their safety may be at risk. Indeed, there are few instances of bullying and students are confident that any instances that are reported will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents and carers also reported that they too were confident that the school's systems were sufficiently robust to deal with any incidents, should they occur.

Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and more likely to underachieve are well supported. Close scrutiny of case studies provided by the school demonstrates some striking examples of the impact on students' outcomes of the support provided. Students new to the school settle in quickly and are well supported. One parent stated, 'My daughter has settled in really well and quickly in the school. The school should be commended for its effective process of integrating new students.'

Attendance is taken seriously by all staff and concerted efforts have secured a rate of attendance which is in line with the national average. Data are collected regularly and rigorously monitored, and work with external agencies has been effective in securing this improving trend. In fact, the school's approach to improving attendance has been highly praised by the local authority as an example of good practice.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have made a concerted effort to implement and embed systems which secure school improvement. Self-evaluation processes are rigorous and accurate, and middle leaders are held to account for the performance of their areas. Systems for monitoring students' academic progress, as well as for behaviour and attendance, are established and enable staff to identify specific groups which are

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

at risk of underachieving. The school's maxim, 'Learn Lead Inspire', is known by all, and is steering improvement at an accelerated rate. The headteacher has made judicious decisions relating to several aspects of the provision and is able to demonstrate impact on students' outcomes. For example, the revised curriculum model now allows all students to follow an appropriate Key Stage 4 programme of study over a three year period and guides students to follow pathways which suit their needs. The introduction of a vertical tutoring system encourages students from Years 7 to 11 to learn from each other, and members of the sixth form assist tutors admirably with personalised academic mentoring. Changes in the leadership and management of the sixth form have been implemented successfully, but it is too early to measure the impact on students' outcomes. The effective management of teaching and learning is evident through the sharp increase in the proportion of good teaching. Support is offered to teachers in need of development through a number of strategies including teacher coaches, and an impressive in-house delivery of professional development.

Members of the governing body demonstrate a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development and have restructured committees to focus on the core business of the school. Leaders, managers and the governing body ensure that arrangements for safeguarding students are robust and effective. The school is effective in tackling discrimination in any form and this contributes significantly to nurturing a harmonious community. It also implements its equal opportunities policies effectively through the monitoring of different groups of students' progress, and its success in narrowing gaps in achievement among these groups. Because of the progress in school improvement demonstrated over time, and the strengthening of leadership at all levels, capacity to sustain improvement is good.

The curriculum is effective in meeting the needs of all students. The two-year Key Stage 3 provision accelerates students' rate of learning and they make informed decisions as to their choice for further study in Key Stage 4. Many students participate in the wide range of after-school activities and are appreciative of this aspect of the provision. The curriculum is enhanced through the specialist provision and through some work with outside organisations, although these links are not fully maximised. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by high expectations of all staff who present very positive role models for students. They work well together and through the house and school council meetings make a positive contribution to school improvement. They show consideration for those less fortunate than themselves by raising substantial amounts for charity and participate in activities including World Challenge to deepen their cultural understanding.

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.



10 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Gosford Hill School, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 2NT

Thank you very much for making the inspection team feel welcome when we visited your school. You told us you enjoy school and you feel safe when in school. Here are our main findings.

- Gosford Hill is a good school and you make good progress by the end of Key Stage 4. The sixth form is satisfactory but steadily improving. This is because sixth form students are starting to make more progress over time.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and a small proportion is outstanding. Teachers mostly make good use of the information they have about your previous learning when planning lessons. They plan their lessons well, and include a wide range of activities, which you say you enjoy.
- Your work is marked regularly and teachers' comments are helpful in showing you how you can move up to the next level of attainment. However, this good quality of marking is not yet consistent across all subjects.
- Your behaviour is good, both in and outside lessons. In the few occasions where there is low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons, this is often because the lesson planning does not take all of your learning needs into account.
- Leaders, managers and members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have implemented a number of successful changes which have improved your outcomes. Such changes include the vertical tutoring system and your revised curriculum.

We have asked your school's leaders and managers to ensure more of you exceed your challenging targets, and to work with your teachers to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. We have asked them to ensure all teachers mark to the same high standard and to build on links with outside organisations to make your curriculum even more effective. We ask you to work hard to achieve your targets.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**