

Oriel High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134042
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381593
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Hill

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	1378
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pravin Mistry
Headteacher	Philip Stack
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2008
School address	Maidenbower Lane Maidenbower Crawley RH10 7XW
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Hill	Additional inspector
Roger Fenwick	Additional inspector
Barbara Firth	Additional inspector
Jacqueline White	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jason Wye	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 48 lessons delivered by 47 teachers, of which three were joint lesson observations, two with senior staff and one with a middle leader. Inspectors met with staff, including senior and middle managers, eight groups of students from all key stages, and spoke to representatives of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at school self-review and planning documents, policies, minutes of the governing body, school performance data, safeguarding procedures and the work of students in lessons. They considered the results of 379 parental questionnaires, 160 student questionnaires and 83 staff questionnaires.

Information about the school

Oriel High School is a larger-than-average secondary school, with increasing numbers in the sixth form. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low compared to the national average. The proportion of disabled students or students who have special educational needs is average, though the proportion with statements of special educational needs is higher than found nationally. The school has designated specialist provision for students with specific learning difficulties. Most students are of White British heritage, although many other ethnic groups are represented. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is steadily increasing, particularly the number of students who are at the early stages of English acquisition, and is now in line with the national average. Following an extended period with a higher-than-average incidence of students starting the school within a key stage, the school roll is now stabilising, with its lower year groups full and the school oversubscribed. The school meets the current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Since its last inspection in 2008, a new headteacher was appointed who took up post in September 2009 and senior leadership responsibilities have been restructured. The school has a number of awards including Investors in Careers, Dyslexia Aware School and Healthy Schools status.

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

- Oriel High School is a good school that is rapidly improving. The strategic and determined leadership of the headteacher to develop all leaders and the governing body's effective challenge to pursue further improvements in the quality of teaching are key to the school continuing its current pace of improvement. In this inclusive and harmonious community, students are supported well and their views valued. Students say they feel very safe, and their parents and carers agree. The sixth form is satisfactory.
- Achievement is good overall. Student attainment at the end of Year 11 is in line with the national average. Most students make good progress from their starting points and achievement is good. Some unevenness in achievement across subjects and between groups of students exists. The achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory. The achievement of disabled students and students who have special educational needs is good, due to the effectively tailored support.
- Good teaching across the school is characterised by effective questioning which supports students in making good progress and by opportunities for students to develop independence in their learning. This is not consistent. Teachers do not always tailor learning systematically to meet students' needs. The use of written feedback is variable. Good examples were seen where students were informed how to improve. Where students do not receive such feedback, they are unclear about how they can make better progress.
- Student behaviour is good, with an atmosphere of mutual respect between students. While the majority of students and their parents and carers considered behaviour, overall and in lessons, to be good, some commented on a small minority of students affecting a few lessons. The school deals decisively with any disruption to learning.
- Senior leaders have an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are focused sharply on increasing the proportion of good or better teaching and their evaluation ensures staff are accountable for students' progress. Leaders at all levels are yet to evaluate with the same rigour.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by modelling and sharing the good practice that already exists within the school to ensure that:
 - lesson activities are well sequenced and learning objectives build systematically on students' prior attainment
 - opportunities for students to develop independence in their learning are increased
 - all teachers use probing questioning well to monitor and deepen students' understanding in order to accelerate their progress.
- Increase the proportion of students achieving five higher-grade GCSEs including English and mathematics so that it is above the national average by summer 2013 through ensuring:
 - all teachers use the high-quality data available to set challenging targets that focus on how students need to improve subject-specific skills
 - all teachers mark students' work regularly, provide precise written feedback as to what students must do to achieve their targets and check their responses routinely
 - leaders at all levels are equally expert in sharply evaluating the work of their teams to drive improvements in student outcomes.
- Consolidate and improve achievement in the sixth form by ensuring a greater proportion of sixth form students make good progress by summer 2014.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with broadly average attainment. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has risen though remained broadly average. The school recognises the need for further improvement in this key indicator and for reducing the variation between subjects. Scrutiny of current attainment data indicates that gaps in performance between English and mathematics are closing, with collaboration in tracking student attainment now in place.

Though boys made better progress than girls did last year, progress for each was significantly above the national average, with most students making good progress overall during their time at the school. Where there is variance – for example, the achievement of higher attaining students in English is below average – the school's interventions are bringing about improvements. Achievement in lessons is variable because of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. The progress students make in mathematics has improved and there are significant signs of improvement in English, particularly for high attaining female students in Year 9.

The school has developed well-focused strategies to ensure that the increasing proportion of students who are learning to speak English as an additional language are increasingly learning highly effectively. They are making good progress in line

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with their peers, as do disabled students and students who have special educational needs. Although the school has yet to use comparisons against national benchmarks rigorously to inform group level evaluations, its well-developed structure for identifying individual students at risk of underachieving is developing into the systematic monitoring of the progress of groups and effective interventions for both groups and individuals.

Questionnaire responses from parents and carers were highly positive about the level of progress made by their children. In a Year 11 English lesson, students made good progress with their awareness of the use of tone and appreciating the subtleties of language use. In this and other lessons seen, students' achievement was good and they made good progress by working collaboratively and applying their learning, for example against GCSE examination criteria.

In the sixth form, student outcomes are satisfactory though there is considerable variance between different subjects. Last year students made satisfactory progress, following a year when progress had been good. Students enjoy their time in the sixth form. The school is rightly reviewing the curriculum to ensure that student course choices fully meet their academic needs.

Quality of teaching

In the best lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge is used well to make precise interventions and planning builds systematically on students' prior attainment. Students are engaged in challenging activities and opportunities which develop their understanding and skills in fulfilment of the school's mission: 'Empowered to achieve, Inspired to excel.' These lessons are characterised by good pace, high student engagement, scope for students to work and learn collaboratively, appropriate challenge and high expectations. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, students were observed in coaching pairs, rising to the challenge of collaboratively developing new knowledge and skills.

In lessons where teaching is good, well-focused questioning enables students to develop skills rapidly. Teachers use praise directly linked to students' achievement which encourages high expectations and reflective learning. Time allowed for peer assessment in a well-structured Year 11 art lesson enabled students to make good progress when experimenting with different recording techniques and a range of media. No inadequate teaching was observed. Effective teaching of the personal development curriculum by specialist personal, social and health education staff and specialist citizenship staff is a strength within the school. Preparing young people for complex lives and deepening their understanding and appreciation of social, cultural and religious diversity runs as a core through the curriculum. The broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum through to the sixth form gives an informed basis for teaching and learning.

On the occasions where teaching is satisfactory, it embodies too much time spent listening to the teacher and this limits opportunities for students to work and learn independently and from each other. Teachers' questioning does not ensure an

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appropriate pace, and opportunities for frequent checking and accelerating students' learning are missed. Teacher and student expectations for work and behaviour are not sufficiently high in relation to their prior attainment to ensure all students reach their potential. Younger students said that they found teachers' use of level ladders that show them how to move to the next level really helpful and would value their consistent use across the curriculum.

Day-to-day marking and feedback to students vary considerably. Where assessment is weaker, there is little evidence of precise guidance on how students can move to the next stage to enable them to take ownership of their learning. Nevertheless, where teachers' feedback is precise and informative, not all students are yet acting upon the advice; for example, students asked to complete a task or follow through an idea do not always do so. The setting and quality of homework set are variable across the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Those students spoken with were emphatic that they feel safe at the school and their parents' and carers' questionnaire responses endorsed this. Movement observed around the school is safe and calm, with good relationships throughout the school. Students are punctual to lessons. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school which supported that which individuals and groups of students spoke about when discussing what behaviour was like in school typically. This was reinforced by scrutiny of school records over time which indicated that behaviour overall was good. Staff, parents and carers and students, particularly those in the sixth form, acknowledge significant improvements in behaviour as a result of well-focused strategies, including increasing involvement of students in the life of the school as student ambassadors, prefects, buddies for new students and the strengthened pastoral system. When talking to individuals and groups of students, inspectors probed the views expressed by some parents and carers and a small minority of students. While both acknowledged that behaviour in the school overall was not of concern, students explained to inspectors that the disruptive behaviour referred to was caused by a small minority of students in very few subject classes.

Students value the mixed-age tutoring system. The school is a very cohesive community where students are considerate of different needs and respect other people's views and beliefs. Students explained the school's support in raising their awareness of the range of potential bullying and risks to their safety, together with strategies to keep themselves safe. They confirmed that incidents of bullying of any kind, including the physical, cyber and emotional types, were rare and, when they occur, are dealt with firmly and quickly. Exclusions have been significantly reduced, including internal exclusion from lessons. Continuous application of effective strategies has ensured that the above average attendance rates are continuing to improve, including in the sixth form, where an effective electronic attendance system enhances the safeguarding of students. The pastoral learning community structure is a contributory factor to the good behaviour and cohesiveness of this large school. 'I particularly appreciate their [the school's] effort in making sure all year groups join in

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activities which helps younger pupils feel comfortable at school' is representative of comments recorded by parent and carers on their questionnaire responses, reflecting their high level of recognition of the school's cohesiveness.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and governing body's decisive actions over recent years and leaders' clear determination for the school's continuous improvement has secured a highly committed staff team, a good education for students and for Oriol High to be now the school of first choice in the locality. The drive of the governing body and the considered actions of leaders are promoting equality and tackling discrimination through their cohesive focus on closing gaps in the achievement of different groups within the school. Parents and carers show increasing confidence in the school, with many positive questionnaire responses, 'I am very happy with this school – and even though [there] have been concerns they are always addressed and the situation dealt with.' The governing body and school leaders ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place which are known, and effectively used, across the school.

Professional development for staff includes effective pathways for individuals and opportunities for emerging leaders' involvement in improvement projects and for sharing classroom practice. Driving continuous improvements in the quality of teaching is integral to this programme. Most staff surveyed were positive about every aspect of the school; all were proud to be a member of staff. With the recently introduced assessment tracking system, staff share live assessment data with students. Through the challenge of the governing body and incisive leadership of the headteacher, individual departments are being held to account increasingly for student outcomes. Skilled and rigorous evaluation, including of teams, against student outcomes is developing though yet to be consistently embedded across leaders at all levels. However, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

The broad school curriculum meets the needs of students with progression routes to sixth form and pathways to higher education. Together with the annual summer activities week, the varied and wide-ranging enrichment programme and opportunities to perform and participate in sport, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted strongly. For a few students at Key Stage 4, vocational pathways effectively maintain their engagement with learning. Mutually supportive partnerships enable effective transition at age 11, including a week of activities at Windmill Hill, and activities such as the careers event for Year 9 supported by staff from local businesses. Those joining the school during a key stage spoke highly about the support they receive, including their translation buddies. Sixth form students benefit from a tailored programme of information, advice and guidance, with access to university open days and career events, including opportunities within the local health authority.

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.

24 February 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Oriel High School, Crawley RH10 7XW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, listening to your views and being part of your lessons.

We were impressed to see that your behaviour around the school is good overall, particularly during break and lunchtime. You told us behaviour has improved in school and that you feel very safe. We were interested to see our survey of 160 students informed us that some students do not agree that students 'behave well in lessons' all the time. When we spoke to you, we found that you think almost all of you behave well all of the time; one or two of your fellow students do sometimes cause disruption in a few lessons, but you stressed that this is rare. Those of you in the sixth form are good role models for those in other years; though your achievement is satisfactory, your teachers are reviewing structures to help you increase your rate of progress.

You are considerate of different needs and respect others' views and beliefs. You make good progress from joining the school through to Year 11 and your achievement is good overall. This is supported by teaching which, when good, is well matched to your previous learning, enabling you to improve your subject skills and ensuring you are challenged to think and learn independently. You told us how helpful it was when teachers gave you clear guidance as to how to improve when marking your work and we agree with you that this is helpful and that it is inconsistent across teachers at present.

One of the reasons why your school is good is that leaders take effective steps to improve things quickly. We agree with you that your pastoral learning community provides you with a very supportive environment in which to thrive. All the staff want you to do well and the school to be even better. We have asked the governors and staff to:

- increase the amount of good and better teaching in school, for example by making sure teachers give you work that is exactly right for each of you and provide plenty of opportunities to develop your independent learning skills
- set challenging targets to improve your subject skills in order to raise achievement
- regularly mark your work with comments that advise you of how to improve it, and then check that you made those improvements.

You can all help your teachers by responding positively to challenging targets and using their feedback to improve the quality of your work. On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Hill
Lead inspector

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