

The Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116494
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	363856
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Raeside HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	983
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gallford
Headteacher	David Pover
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2007
School address	Salisbury Road Fordingbridge SP6 1EZ
Telephone number	01425 652039
Fax number	01425 656625
Email address	burgate@burgate.hants.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 39 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at its analysis of student progress and attainment. They also scrutinised the school development plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, policies and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires completed by 221 parents and carers, 142 students and 71 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the school in improving the quality of assessment and subject-based feedback.
- The impact of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning, with a particular focus on the learning and progress of students of average ability, and the progress all students make in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of strategies to secure good or outstanding behaviour and their impact across all year groups.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in driving consistent improvement in teaching, learning and students' outcomes.

Information about the school

The Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre is of average size, with a slightly higher than average proportion of boys on roll. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. The great majority of students are White British. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about half the national average. There are nine looked after children on roll. The sixth form is large in proportion to the rest of the school, comprising almost a third of all students, many from neighbouring authorities. The headteacher was appointed in January 2011. The school has held specialist status in humanities since September 2009 and plans to convert to an academy by May 2011.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre is a cohesive and harmonious community where students are exceptionally well cared for, supported and prepared for the next stage of their education or employment. The outstanding sixth form centre offers a collegiate atmosphere where learning is purposeful, achievement is high and progression rates to further or higher education are excellent. The overall standard of education in the main school is satisfactory. Students in Years 7 to 11 also attain well, gaining GCSE qualifications in a range of subjects. However, the proportion attaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C dropped in 2009 and 2010 and the progress made by students overall, particularly by those of average ability, was significantly below expectations. The newly appointed headteacher has set a clear direction for the school and has rightly set the focus on improving teaching and learning so that achievement is consistently high for all students.

Students justifiably feel very safe at Burgate and are confident that any concerns they have will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The school makes particular efforts to reach out to the families of more vulnerable students and forges good relationships to enable such students to succeed in their education, sometimes against considerable odds. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive well-targeted support both in lessons and in the nurture centre, which helps develop confidence and collaborative learning skills through a well-focused range of activities.

Although much teaching is good, and there is some outstanding practice, the quality of teaching varies across year groups and subjects. The best learning and progress take place in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, but for younger students half of teaching seen during the inspection was no more than satisfactory. Similarly, teaching seen in the specialist humanities subjects was predominantly good or outstanding, but in mathematics, only satisfactory. This uneven approach is reflected in assessment practice, which is excellent in some areas, but too inconsistently applied across the school to have a wide-reaching impact on progress. Although good whole-school systems for tracking student performance are in place, they are not used effectively within lessons to inform teachers' planning or to help students know how to improve their work. In GCSE classes, work is routinely related to examination criteria and grade targets, so that students can clearly see the purpose of tasks and how they relate to the next stage in their learning. This is not always the case in the lower years, where students' grasp of the relationship between the work set and their overall progress towards targets is variable.

Senior and middle leaders are collectively and consistently determined to pursue excellence for Burgate and fully committed to the direction for improvement set by the headteacher. They share his determination to raise standards of attainment and improve

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teaching. They have been fully consulted and involved in the creation of the institutional development plan and they value the freedom they have as leaders to develop their subject areas and to contribute to school improvement. By accurately identifying past weaknesses, they have closed gaps in the relative performance of boys and girls and implemented a highly successful action plan for the sixth form. Some weaknesses remain, however, such as those identified in teaching and progress. It is too early for the new headteacher's clear agenda for improvement to have had a measurable impact; systems for evaluating the quality of provision across the school have not been sufficiently sharply implemented at all levels to prevent the recent decline in attainment and progress, and some aspects of self-evaluation, such as lesson observations, are at times over-generous. On balance, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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?

- Improve outcomes for middle-ability students by ensuring that leaders at all levels rigorously monitor and evaluate provision for different groups and continue to drive improvement
- Develop rigorous systems for assessing student performance and tracking progress that are consistently applied across all subject departments and key stage
- Improve the quality of all teaching so that it is consistently good or better in all subjects and year groups, by ensuring that:
 - lesson planning is equally effective in all year groups, so that the purpose and expected outcomes of lessons are always clear
 - all teachers make equally effective use of assessment data to ensure that activities are well matched to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students
 - marking and target-setting are regular, developmental and linked to assessment, so that they involve and inform students about how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students at Burgate are well motivated and focused on their learning and they generally have excellent relationships with one another and with their teachers. Their desire to learn and do well is reflected in their good attainment in GCSE examinations. Attainment in English remains consistently high and progress in English is generally as expected; in mathematics, attainment is above average, but progress, particularly for those of average ability, is significantly below expectations.

Behaviour at Burgate is good and often excellent. Students are polite and courteous to one another and to adults. This contributes to their strong feeling of safety at school. Exclusions are virtually unknown and students respond well to the code of conduct.

Students appreciate the range of ways in which they can get involved in school life. They spoke proudly of the school's strong sporting traditions and how they enjoy competing both locally and at county or even national levels. Uptake of after-school activities is good

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and carefully monitored by the school to ensure fairness and wide participation. Students have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles, although they felt that healthy eating could be better promoted. The school council is increasingly active and beginning to become involved in key decision making, such as the appointment of the headteacher, although its contribution to evaluation of the quality of learning is less well developed. Students' good levels of literacy, their good attainment overall and their above average attendance all prepare them well for the future, as do their exceptionally positive attitudes to collaboration and team work. As a result, almost all continue into employment, further education or training. Opportunities to develop spiritually are evident in some subjects such as art, but are less secure than the moral and social aspects of learning. Students were insecure in expressing their wider cultural understanding and this rightly remains an ongoing priority for the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Despite many good, and a few outstanding, lessons observed during the inspection, teaching is only satisfactory overall because there is too much variation in its quality. In the best lessons, students' enthusiasm for learning is harnessed by well-planned teaching. Students make good progress because they are given opportunities to develop their thinking through collaboration and because expectations are high. They know their targets and are able to explain what they are doing and how it links to learning objectives and

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examination grades. The quality of the dialogue between students and the teacher is high because it is keenly focused on developing understanding. The pace of learning is brisk.

In too many lessons, however, particularly in Years 7 to 9, students make insufficient progress, often because lesson planning has not adequately tailored activities to their starting points. At times, students are unclear about the purpose of the task or what they are expected to achieve and too much time is spent on clarification. Where lessons are strongly teacher driven, students lack opportunities to discuss or explore their ideas, leading, occasionally, to boredom and inattention.

A half-termly process for target-setting and assessing students' work is in place and provides information to senior leaders that informs whole-school tracking. However, the use of this information at subject or teacher level is inconsistent. Where it is well applied, it has a striking impact on learning, for example in a drama lesson where students confidently discussed recent moderation information and how it would help them to reach or exceed their targets. In some lessons, however, students were unclear about their targets, the level of their current work, or how to improve. Although verbal feedback is often helpful and constructive, this is not matched by marking; students are sometimes not able to explain how marking relates to learning. Some very good diagnostic marking is used in English and science, but such good practice has not been established as whole-school policy or practice.

The good and improving curriculum takes increasing account of students' interests and learning needs. The historically traditional range of subjects on offer has now been adapted to include more diverse pathways, using partnerships which offer less conventional routes of learning. Students are very well supported to make appropriate choices from the three learning pathways now on offer, which include well-tailored alternative courses and guided GCSE entry for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Enrichment opportunities are wide, varied and greatly appreciated by students. They include sport and the arts, team building during 'activities week' and trips abroad to support language learning. There is some innovative practice, particularly in the specialism, for example the development of a bank of historical artefacts for use in lessons and on loan to other schools.

The very large majority of students agreed with the statement: 'Adults care about me'. Inspectors encountered various examples of staff going out of their way to overcome barriers to learning, such as teaching one boy at home whose complex medical needs make it impossible for him to attend a conventional timetable. Senior leaders have effectively built trust with different parent communities, such as Travellers, so that home-school partnerships support learning. One parent commented, 'Our son has grown in confidence whilst at Burgate and because of the help, support and praise he receives, he is encouraged to do well and rise to the challenge, which he thoroughly enjoys.'

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

In the six weeks since his appointment, the headteacher has galvanised the enthusiasm of the staff and established a clear vision for Burgate's future. Leaders at all levels understand and share this vision and have contributed to a sharply focused institutional development plan in which each subject has its own set of actions and accountabilities. One middle leader stated, 'I have never felt more certain about what we're trying to achieve than I do now.' Some middle leaders accurately perceive an important priority for the future as moving from being 'good at training students to pass exams' to fostering independent learners. The traffic light system for tracking student progress is supporting this by refining teachers' understanding of how to target underachievement and intervene to secure progress. Leaders know where the strengths in teaching and assessment lie and their work is beginning to extend beyond this evaluation to the consistent application of best practice.

The governing body provides a wide range of expertise to support and challenge the school. Governors are rigorous in ensuring the safety of students and are fully compliant with procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection. Together with the headteacher, they are implementing plans to monitor and challenge the quality of provision through first-hand, systematic evaluation, as well as making good use of governor training to keep abreast of educational policy and practice. The school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers through surveys and questionnaires which are monitored by school leaders and the governing body. Systems of financial management are robust. Substantial refurbishment has enhanced the learning environment, particularly in the sixth form, and the school is financially secure, with appropriate plans in place to secure further site improvement. Because not all students do as well as they might, however, value for money is no more than satisfactory.

The headteacher is firmly committed to broadening the range of partners working with the school to improve provision and leadership. A leadership exchange has already been established with a neighbouring school with complementary strengths to Burgate in the core subjects of English and mathematics. The local authority is now active in helping the school use data analysis effectively to improve progress. Other partnerships enhance students' understanding of the wider world and different cultural contexts, such as that with a school in Sri Lanka. The school has worked hard to promote community cohesion, within its largely mono-ethnic context, through visiting speakers, a 'diversity day' and staff training. It recognises clearly the need to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes and this is communicated well to students. It has a clear understanding of the socio-economic

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diversity of its community, and students from different backgrounds get on extremely well together. ♦ ♦

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The sixth form is, rightly, a great source of pride to the school. Achievement in 2010 was outstanding and this, along with the good teaching and excellent relationships in the centre, attracts students from well beyond the immediate vicinity. Those who arrive from other settings integrate quickly and settle well. Sixth formers take an active part in the life of the school, initiating charity events and clubs and feeding back their evaluation of the quality of provision to centre leaders.

Students are well known by teachers and thrive in predominantly small teaching groups. Lessons are often characterised by mutual support and challenge, and an atmosphere of genuine intellectual enquiry and ambition. In an A level English lesson, students confidently explained how they would apply linguistic analysis to the study of Shakespeare, demonstrating a depth of understanding and a capacity to make intuitive links across disciplines.

The head of sixth form and her strong team of tutors have a clear vision and well-developed plans for maintaining and improving standards, although some aspects, such as the systematic evaluation of the quality of teaching, are not fully implemented. Students have confidence in staff to listen to and act upon their views on a range of issues. The atmosphere of the centre is purposeful and productive.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these, the very large majority are happy with their child's experience at Burgate and agreed that their children enjoy school and feel safe there. Most feel well informed about their child's progress and that the school is well led and managed. A small minority did not agree that the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour and, although behaviour was overwhelmingly good during the inspection, inspectors did find that some learning was inhibited by minor disruption, usually related to the quality of teaching.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 221 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 983 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	26	134	61	24	11	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	30	144	65	6	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	62	28	141	64	13	6	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	29	129	58	22	10	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	24	151	68	15	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	19	141	64	32	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	16	146	66	28	13	3	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	20	135	61	21	10	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	22	142	64	21	10	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	22	125	57	29	13	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	18	137	62	29	13	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	29	148	67	13	6	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	26	148	67	11	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre, Fordingbridge SP6
1EZ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We found Burgate to be an extremely safe and happy environment and it was a pleasure to hear from you about the many ways in which teachers and other staff go out of their way to maintain this. The care, guidance and support you receive, especially those of you who sometimes need additional help with your learning, are outstanding. This helps you to achieve good GCSE results and to go on to study in your outstanding sixth form or elsewhere.

We thought that teaching in the sixth form and in GCSE classes was particularly good. Some of you are learning to become genuinely independent learners and, in the sixth form especially, you support and encourage one another extremely well. Students who arrive at Burgate from other schools settle in quickly and make good progress because of this.

You are good at getting involved in life beyond lessons, especially in sport. You told us that you appreciate these opportunities and we were impressed to see what good use you make of them.

Despite the many strengths of your school, there is room for improvement. Not all of you make equally good progress and we've asked your teachers and the school leaders to work with you to ensure that you all know how well you are doing and how to improve, especially if you are in Years 7 to 9. Lessons in these year groups could be better planned to ensure that you are all learning at a good pace and no one loses concentration or distracts others.

You can help by getting fully involved in your own learning. Ask your teachers if you are not sure what your targets are or how to reach them, and support one another to concentrate and work hard in every lesson.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside Her Majesty's Inspector

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