

# Peacehaven Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131601
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	364027
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Metham HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	848
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Creasey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Cryer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Greenwich Way Peacehaven BN10 8RB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 581100
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 575859
<b>Email address</b>	hcryer@phcs.org.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 30 lessons, observing 30 different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and students. They evaluated students' attainment over three years, schemes of work, policies, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They considered 306 responses to the questionnaire sent to parents and carers, 100 responses to the students' questionnaire and 70 responses from staff.

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

- How effective leaders and managers are in developing good practice across all departments and both key stages.
- How successfully the curriculum, including the enrichment programme, meets the needs of students across the ability range.
- What the impact has been of the mathematics and science specialisms and the school's role as a training school on provision and outcomes for the school's students.
- How successfully the school is building mutually supportive relationships with its local community.

## Information about the school

The school was established ten years ago in response to local pressure for additional provision in Peacehaven. It achieved specialist status for science and mathematics in September 2005. In April 2009 it also gained Training School status. It holds the Gold Artsmark and the Gold Award for Continuing Professional Development. In partnership with two secondary schools, a special school and a further education college, it offers Diploma options and is a lead school for work with gifted and talented students.

The proportion of students identified as eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups. English is not the first language for only three per cent of students. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is relatively high and there is a designated resource base for 25 students with speech and language difficulties.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Among the striking features of this good school are the enthusiasm and energy with which the headteacher, staff and students together foster a buoyant sense of community. Students are valued as individuals whatever their abilities and interests and, as one remarked, feel 'very lucky to have such a say in what goes on'. A similar view is expressed by staff; for example, 'I feel extremely valued in my day-to-day life at this school.' Under the purposeful and persuasive leadership of the headteacher and her senior team, evaluation of strengths and areas for further development is clear and accurate. Strategies to enhance the professional skills of teachers and support staff and to reinforce good learning habits among students are driving sustainable improvement. The capacity for further improvement is good.

By Year 11 students' attainment is broadly average but students make good progress from their starting points and overall achievement is good. Extremely thorough and well informed review of each student's learning leads to appropriate targets and, where needed, carefully managed additional support. Results in early entry GCSE mathematics and science modules demonstrate improving attainment. Students are well behaved, responsive and keen to do well but many have limited aspirations and this has an impact on their learning and personal development. Although improving in response to robust school action, attendance is currently average and this, together with their average standards, means that the support for students' future economic well-being is also average.

Most teaching is good, some is outstanding. Shared strengths include: secure subject knowledge; a very positive rapport with students; generally good questioning skills; a confident use of varied resources, including up-to-date technology; and, a well established culture of peer review and sharing of good practice. Lesson plans, while usually clear and well structured, do not always take sufficient account of students' range of abilities and learning styles. While much teaching is lively, lessons are not always well paced. On occasion, the time given to activities does not match students' attention spans or particular needs.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Mixed year mentoring groups strengthen the school's cohesiveness as a community and younger students benefit from support given by older ones. An all-round approach is taken to students' progress and well-being, with extremely effectively coordinated support from staff and regular liaison with external 'care' agencies.

The school has built excellent links with the surrounding community and developed highly productive partnerships with local schools, colleges and businesses. These most usefully extend students' options. Students build up an extremely well-balanced sense of their

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place in the wider community through involvement with local schools ♦ shared student council meetings for example ♦ and with a cross-section of the local population. Their awareness of cultural diversity and its impact nationally is outstanding and unusually well developed through multimedia projects, independent enquiry and, on occasion, direct action ♦ holding the local Member of Parliament to account for example. An international perspective is added through curriculum topics, trips overseas, links with Africa and visits from teachers and students from Continental Europe.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate improvements in attainment by:
  - ensuring that lesson planning and teaching methods consistently reflect and support students' diverse learning styles and abilities
  - improving attendance.
- Strengthen students' development of skills and attitudes that will contribute to their future economic well-being by:
  - developing the curriculum's breadth and challenge to give students the qualifications and the confidence to be ambitious.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Attainment is at least in line with national averages and was good in a third of the lessons seen. Results in mathematics and in science modules ♦ the school's specialism subjects ♦ are higher than in the previous year. Students make good progress from a low starting point. For example, progress in English is exceeding predictions based on Key Stage 2 assessments. Well-directed support for less-able students and those with specific educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they also make good progress. Systematic monitoring has highlighted improved progress by the broad middle band; results in mock GCSE examinations show a higher proportion likely to gain C rather than D. Those identified as eligible for free school meals progress as well as others.

Students understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and most participate in sports and activities. They feel very safe, support each other and are confident that any difficulties will be quickly resolved, either by older students or by staff. Behaviour is good both within the school and outside, as a result of the school's good management policies and ethos. As a police report on local crime figures states, 'Reductions (in youth crime) have been consistent in recent years and in no small part is down to the behaviour of Peacehaven Community School pupils both within the school and notably the local community.' Students take on leadership roles in local schools, work with the elderly and are active in local politics and local government. Individual enterprise is encouraged. For example, students eligible for free school meals have trained as Young Inspectors with the local authority and now review provision in public sector services. Students' outstanding contribution to the wider community is matched by their contribution within school. The school council is respected and influential. Older students act as mentors and mediators, and Student Champions promote equality of respect and opportunity. The school's ethos

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and the opportunities presented to students extend their experience beyond daily routines ♦ for example travel to the Alps ♦ and support good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Most teaching is good and some better. Lesson plans clearly identify what is to be learnt and lead students logically from one step to the next. The impact of good professional development is clear in teachers' questioning techniques, their encouragement of students to work independently and to evaluate their own and others' work and their confident use of varied resources. Marking of written work generally balances encouragement with guidance on how to improve. Students' varied abilities and learning styles are not always fully catered for and, in the few lessons seen where pace and variety of presentation flagged or the time allowed for an activity was misjudged, students lost concentration. Examples of excellent practice, however, were also seen and the teaching of less-able or less-confident students in small groups was outstanding.

The curriculum successfully meets the needs of most students and offers clear progression routes to further education, training or employment. In Key Stage 3 the core curriculum is well complemented by time given to developing skills and encouraging students to take a thoughtful interest in social and ethical issues. Strong links with primary schools ensure

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smooth transition. Sensibly, students are allowed to embark on their Key Stage 4 options at the end of Year 9, thereby allowing more time to cover courses such as triple science. While there is an emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, options in Key Stage 4 are organised as far as possible to support students' preferences. Possibilities are extended through college courses, the Hospitality Diploma and Youth Award. Students benefit from a broad and balanced programme of extra-curricular activities, including weekly clubs and activities, and special events such as ski trips.

Outstanding care, guidance and support stem from a focus on individual students rather than groups and the trouble taken to engage parents and carers in key discussion and decisions. The school employs an on-site social worker, who gives helpful support to students and ensures that teachers and support staff are well informed about child protection procedures. Links with external agencies are strengthened by monthly case reviews that complement the school's weekly review of students known to be vulnerable or disaffected. Achievement coordinators and mentors provide a fine network of pastoral care that contributes most effectively to the school's ethos.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The clear and ambitious vision presented by the headteacher and senior leaders is supported by staff at every level. Middle leaders are encouraged to contribute to strategic planning and evaluation in a culture described by one as 'sharing, teamwork and readiness for change'. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is complemented by whole-staff training, individual coaching and modelling of good practice. The safety and well-being of students and staff underpin all planning. Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place and well understood at all levels as a result of good training. Steady support is given by governors, who play their role as 'critical friends' with commitment and care and who are a visible and encouraging presence in the school, and meet their statutory responsibilities conscientiously. They reinforce links with the local community. They are helping to extend partnerships with schools, colleges, businesses and local governance, which the school uses to provide extremely valuable opportunities for its students. Good management of the mathematics and science specialism and of the training school ensures that the benefits of partnership are mutual. The school works hard to engage parents and carers, communicating regularly through newsletters, inviting them to 'taster' classes and providing a website that parents and carers are starting to use to track their children's progress and to support their learning. Outstanding strengths include the excellent support for equality of opportunity and the promotion and coordination of community

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cohesion. Through imaginative curriculum provision, independent enquiry, active participation in events such as the county's 'Big Vote' and links with students and teachers globally, all four strands of the community cohesion programme are most effectively developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Although a small number of parents expressed concerns about the school's approach to disruptive behaviour and about academic standards, the majority of those responding to the inspection questionnaire expressed great confidence in the leadership and management, in the quality of the teaching and in the school's strategies to keep their children safe. A flavour of the majority view is given by this comment, 'I can only praise this school - my son is a different child. He laughs, he's happy and he is subsequently progressing beyond all expectations.' Inspection evidence supports the positive picture presented by this majority of parents and carers.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 306 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 848 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	27	187	61	25	8	6	2
The school keeps my child safe	96	31	187	61	17	6	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	101	33	172	56	24	8	6	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	93	30	177	58	27	9	6	2
The teaching is good at this school	82	27	193	63	16	5	5	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	22	166	54	50	16	8	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	13	193	63	50	16	8	3
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)	86	28	180	59	18	6	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	79	26	183	60	26	8	6	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	24	156	51	38	12	24	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	69	23	152	50	40	13	12	4
The school is led and managed effectively	104	34	164	54	12	4	11	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	113	37	156	51	17	6	6	2

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



11 February 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Peacehaven Community School, Peacehaven BN10 8RB**

Thank you for the friendliness and openness with which you helped our inspection team by answering our questions and showing us your work. We share your belief that the school is led and managed well, that it provides you with a good education and that you are very well cared for.

We found that much teaching is good and some is outstanding. Your teachers have confidence and enthusiasm that come from knowing a great deal about their subjects. They make sure you have opportunities to review your own progress and to offer each other constructive criticism, and their marking of your written work generally balances encouragement with specific guidance on how you can improve. Among the school's outstanding strengths are the care and support you are given, extended by an impressive range of partnerships. We appreciated the way you are treated as individuals and the respect and consideration you show each other. It is good to know that you feel safe and enjoy school. We were also impressed by the many ways in which you not only support each other but also make an excellent contribution to your local community.

In order to ensure that your school goes from strength to strength, we have asked your headteacher to make sure that:

- when teachers plan lessons they take into account the different ways in which you learn and how easy or difficult each of you may find a topic or activity
- you all attend school regularly
- you are encouraged to be ambitious and are helped to gain a range of qualifications that will give you real choices in the future.

You can help by not missing lessons if you can avoid it and by aiming high when you start planning your future.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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