



Inspection report

Worthing High School

Unique Reference Number 126090
LEA West Sussex

Inspection number 269379
Inspection dates 10 - 11 November 2004
Reporting inspector Neville Grenyer HMI

Inspection carried out under section 3 of the School Inspection Act 1996, and was deemed section 10 under the same act.

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	South Farm Road,
School category	Specialist Language College		Worthing
Age range of pupils	12 - 16		West Sussex BN14 7AR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01 903 237864
Number on roll	1034	Fax number	01 903 231709
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Iain Taylor
Date of previous inspection	May 1999	Headteacher	Mrs A Beer

Age group	Published	Reference no.
12 - 16	December 2004	269379

Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Worthing High School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Worthing High School is a 12-16 comprehensive school with 1034 students. It was granted Specialist Language College status in 2002. It draws its pupils largely from Worthing. The number of students entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The students' attainment on entry has usually been slightly above average over the past five years, although it has varied a little from year to year. The number of students with special educational needs has increased in recent years and is now broadly in line with the national average. There has also been an increase in the number of students with statements of special educational need. This is now above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, 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.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Worthing High School is a fairly effective school which has correctly identified most of its strengths and weaknesses. Students' standards are average, but their progress is not quite as good as it should be, mainly because of weaker performance in certain subjects. Students' personal development and wellbeing are good, although the level of exclusions is high. The school has a good curriculum, supplemented by a wide range of activities outside the classroom, and it offers students a good level of care. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory; there are some strengths in the leadership team, with recent initiatives beginning to have a positive impact. However, the quality of teaching and learning is not yet consistent throughout the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Grade: 3

Improvement since the last inspection

Improvement has been inadequate, with academic standards lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Only in the last two years has there been demonstrable improvement, with senior managers putting in place arrangements that bode well for the future. The school has made progress with most of the key issues raised in the previous inspection, with the quality of music very much improved. The school is aware of the need for further development in the area of marking and assessment, which is too varied in quality and is unsatisfactory.

Grade: 4

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is now good. The appointments to the senior management team have significantly increased this capacity. Its evaluation is comprehensive and staff have identified most of the important areas for improvement correctly. Specialist school status has helped to raise the profile of languages in the middle schools and the wider community, but has yet to impact significantly on the attainment in languages of its own students; this is an area for development.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement.
- Improve the impact of curriculum managers on achievement and standards.
- Address inconsistencies in the quality and presentation of written work.
- Improve marking.

Achievement and standards

Over several years the standards reached by students in tests and examinations have been broadly average when compared with other schools. This remained the case in 2004, although evidence suggests that the Key Stage 3 test results dipped below average. The school is appealing against its Year 9 English results which, if successful, would be likely to bring the Key Stage 3 results as a whole close to the national average. Standards in GCSE examinations have risen steadily over the past five years and were a little above the national average in 2004, despite a fall in the proportion gaining grade C or above.

The rate of pupils' progress has been mixed. The least able and the most able have made good progress, but those of average ability have not done well enough, especially in Key Stage 4. Pupils have achieved well in certain subjects, such as information and communication technology (ICT), drama, music and English at Key Stage 4, but have underperformed in others, such as science, modern languages, geography, and design and technology. Overall, the students do not achieve as well as they should, which is something the school has recognised accurately in its self-evaluation. This is only partly the result of some having been entered into inappropriate tiers in particular subject examinations. The school has put in place several well-judged measures to improve students' performance, but it is too early to assess their impact.

Grade: 4

Personal development and well-being

Most students enjoy being at the school. The school's surveys show that this increases the longer they are there. Students feel safe from bullying and discrimination while at school. Behaviour in class is satisfactory and broadly reflects the degree to which students are engaged by the teaching. Some younger pupils feel vulnerable in the corridors. The school has developed a useful approach to managing behaviour which includes assurance of equal opportunity. There has been a problem with long-term absences which the school is addressing with the assistance of the local education authority, in line with its policy on attendance and punctuality. The level of exclusion is high and needs to be reduced.

Students are made aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, particularly through personal, social and vocational education and through their work in subjects including science, physical education and food technology. There is a good take-up of sporting activities as part of a rich range of extra curricular activities provided by the school. There are good links with the local community and students contribute well to these, especially through a wide range of charitable fund-raising activities and participation in developing the school travel plan. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their views are carefully listened to and have helped in developing the way the school works, including the wide variety of cultural activities in music, drama and an international cultural programme of activities.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some outstanding teaching seen. However, the proportion of inadequate teaching is too high and the school should address this urgently.

In the best lessons, teachers engage students from the start with useful and interesting activities. The delivery is lively and enthusiastic, a variety of teaching methods are used, and high expectations promote interest in the work. Highly effective and imaginative use of ICT supports learning well. Examples of outstanding practice were seen in business studies, geography, learning support, art and science. When teaching is inadequate, teachers have low expectations of the students and planning is minimal. Classroom management is often poor in these lessons. Overall, inadequate teaching gives too little attention to the individual learning needs of the students.

The marking of students' work is inconsistent. At times marking is used well to support progress and usefully indicates a grade or national curriculum level. Too often, however, it is cursory and does not provide adequate feedback to the students to support improvement in their work. There were two classes in which the students' work had not been marked at all.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the students in most respects. Curricular issues raised in the last report have been fully addressed. Religious education is taught as a discrete subject at Key Stage 3 and it is carefully incorporated into

the personal, social and vocational education course in Key Stage 4. The 'world of work' module significantly enhances this course with good links with local business. Citizenship, health education and careers are also included in this course. Vocational courses in Key Stage 4 are limited although the introduction of work related routes for some students is a positive and growing development.

The good range of extra-curricular activities is a strength of the school and includes music, drama and sports. Homework and breakfast clubs are valued by the students and contribute to their personal development.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Students feel well guided throughout their school career, and report that they have confidence in the guidance they receive when deciding course options. There is good emphasis on developing workplace skills that contributes significantly to their future well-being, but this needs to be strengthened by further improvement in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The support given to vulnerable groups is good. Students confirm that there is always someone they can turn to for support. Careers education and guidance are suitably broad and links with outside agencies on behalf of pupils are effective.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Most of the senior leadership team are relatively new in post and the capacity of the team to improve performance in the future is now good. Senior managers convey a clear vision for the school, work effectively as a team and are aware of the areas where improvement is necessary. The recently created strategic plan is well focused and understood by all staff. Much good work is being undertaken with middle managers to improve their performance, but there remain areas where managers are less effective.

Senior managers have revised and implemented the monitoring and evaluation procedures. These are now clearly focused on teaching and learning, and provide a more rigorous process for lesson observations, and for offering advice and support to help teachers improve their work. The school's self-evaluation is honest, evaluative and broadly reflects the key strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school analyses test and examination results accurately and has begun to use the information more effectively with curriculum managers and teachers. A new approach to setting targets for students has been introduced, which makes very good use of their previous attainment and other information.

These have been communicated to students, and are intended to be used to hold teachers to account for the standards achieved.

The school is an inclusive community. There is an equal opportunities policy and the principles are integrated into the school's behaviour policy. Incidents are recorded effectively and reported to the governing body. Governors are supportive of the school and meet their statutory responsibilities apart from the requirement for collective worship. Governors have begun to challenge the underperformance of some subjects. The school has developed very good links with business and the local community. For example, there is a very effective link with a well known bank, which enhances learning for all students in Key Stage 4. There are also good links with the local education authority, support services, other local schools and further education colleges.

Financial management is good and the buildings and other physical resources are generally well maintained and clean. Some classrooms are shabby in appearance and some areas, such as the canteen and playing fields, are too small for the numbers of students currently enrolled at the school. Teachers are suitably qualified, although the school struggles to make appointments in shortage subject areas.

Grade: 3

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about HMI-led Ofsted inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2004. This document may be freely reproduced in whole or in part, for non-commercial purposes, provided the source and the date are acknowledged.