



Chipping Sodbury School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109324
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278185
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Peter Griffiths HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Bowling Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Chipping Sodbury
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Bristol, South
			Gloucestershire BS37 6EW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 862900
Number on roll	1032	Fax number	01454 862901
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Stimpson
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Philip Lidstone

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	7 December 2005 - 8 December 2005	278185

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has specialist technology school status. The school is of average size and shares the sixth form provision with two neighbouring schools. The school has relatively few students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average while the number with statements of special educational needs is average. The majority of students are from reasonably affluent mixed social backgrounds.

The school has recently consulted with the school community about its core values. The school is now ensuring that these values of respect, integrity, responsibility and aspiration impact on all aspects of school life.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The senior management team at Chipping Sodbury School consider that the overall effectiveness of its provision is satisfactory with some aspects that are good. The evidence from the inspection supports this view.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The senior management team have a very good understanding of their effectiveness and what they need to do to continue to improve and are well placed to do so. The school has implemented a range of strategies to improve learning and achievement, which have led to improved success for students. As a result standards at GCSE are now in line with the national average.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the lessons where the teaching is good, the work is well matched to the needs of the students who show positive attitudes and make good progress. Student behaviour is well managed. Learning support assistants are well directed to support learning.

This is a school where every child matters. The students are well cared for and feel safe and this is contributing to their desire to do well. Students enjoy coming to school. Many take part in the wide range of extra activities. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school and all it offers. This was clearly expressed by parents who said, 'We are delighted with the school. Our children are highly motivated, are working very hard and are achieving good results'.

Following the last inspection the school went through a period of great change and uncertainty. The new leadership team has clearly demonstrated that it has a very strong capacity to improve. It has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection as well as those that arose in the following few years. This has been accomplished alongside the drive on learning and achievement and its successful development as a specialist technology school. The school has formed excellent working partnerships that have contributed to the achievement and well-being of the students. The school has used its resources very effectively and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The senior management's view of the effectiveness of the sixth form is that provision is satisfactory and this is confirmed by the inspection evidence. Students' achievement is satisfactory and standards, as reflected by results in 2005, are average. Students are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. A broad range of courses meet students' individual needs. The school works well with the other schools to coordinate the curriculum provided, though some teaching time is lost because students need to travel between the schools. Students are provided with good care, support and guidance so they describe the school as 'a great place' and appreciate the high level of individual support they receive on a regular basis. They are given

good opportunities to take responsibility. Although the accommodation is unsatisfactory, the school makes the best use it can of the available space.

What the school should do to improve further

- use the existing good practice revealed by departmental reviews to improve the overall quality of teaching
- continue to develop assessment practice so that all students know how well they are achieving in all subjects and what they need to do to further raise the quality of their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students join the school with average standards, although some boys' writing skills are weak. At Key Stage 3, standards are broadly average. Most students make satisfactory progress, though the achievement of higher attaining students has improved less rapidly. The school has implemented effective strategies to address this matter. At Key Stage 4, standards are broadly average. The GCSE results in 2005 represent good progress on the previous year.

Standards are best in mathematics, design and technology and physical education. There have been good improvements in history, geography and English in Key Stage 4. Students achieve less well in modern foreign languages and science in Key Stage 4.

Standards in the sixth form are average, as reflected in the 2005 results. Standards were highest in English literature, history and information and communication technology and less successful in chemistry and modern foreign languages.

Improvements in standards have resulted from the schools' effective use of assessment data to identify those students needing additional help. This information, together with students' views has been used to improve and adapt the range and type of courses at Key Stage 4. The close and careful attention given by the school to ensuring that students are given good advice and support is also improving their motivation to do well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students' social and cultural awareness is very good. They repeatedly show their concern for the needs of others through their participation in the work of various charities. The majority of students readily participate in the wide range of social and cultural exchanges and visits offered by the school.

Students' attitudes towards the school and to lessons are good; the over-whelming majority enjoy coming to school.

Students feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour is satisfactory and often good. The school has made a significant contribution to this through its focus on its core values

of respect, integrity, responsibility and aspiration. Relationships between students and staff are good. When it arises, the school takes bullying seriously and students have access to the support of counsellors. In addition, Year 10 students also offer help to Year 7 students and a friendship group has been established to offer support to victims of bullying. These strategies have had a marked impact on reducing bullying.

Attendance is good. The monitoring of absences is well managed and very effective.

Students improve their understanding and skills in relation to aspects of health through food technology and science as well as through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. In addition to physical education, the sports programme successfully engages a significant number of students in a range of additional sporting activities.

Students have a good knowledge of the world of work and respond enthusiastically to the opportunities presented by the well organised work experience programme. Several subjects successfully help prepare students for financial responsibility.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Recent improvements in the quality of some of the teaching have contributed to the rise in students' achievements. In these lessons, planning, including the identification of objectives that focus directly on students' learning, is good. In some lessons, there are high expectations, where effective questioning techniques are used to extend students' learning. In these lessons, the activities are well matched to students' needs and they enjoy their learning. This is borne out by conversations with students, who are clear about the differences between lessons that are challenging and fun, and those lessons where they do not feel actively involved. Good relationships among students, and between staff and students, are evident. This creates a positive atmosphere in classrooms, where students work effectively in pairs and small groups and readily support one another. Teaching assistants also provide effective support in a number of lessons.

There is much variation in the quality of the marking and assessment of students' work. In the best examples, students are given clear and precise information about what they are doing well, together with details of what they need to do to improve. In other lessons, marking is superficial and does not enable students to make sufficient progress. The senior management team has identified best practice and is working to ensure that this is embedded in the work of all departments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. At Key Stage 3, students study drama and PSHE as well as all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The provision of additional lessons for those students who experience difficulties with English and mathematics is helping to improve their basic skills. In Year 7, students are enthusiastically participating in an exciting new course to improve their thinking and learning skills.

At Key Stage 4, new subjects are available and less academic students can take fewer GCSE subjects in order to concentrate more on basic skills and practical courses. Vocational courses at college are only available to a few individuals by negotiation rather than being choices for all.

The joint sixth form curriculum provides a wide range of courses but is not well coordinated so students miss parts of lessons or lunchtime because no allowance is given for travelling time.

The very wide range of activities provided out of school time are well attended. Subjects are brought to life by trips and visits, inviting speakers and entering competitions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has thorough and very effective systems in place to identify problems, assess risks and ensure that the school environment is safe. Child protection procedures are very good. Most students feel confident approaching staff with worries or complaints and those at risk are quickly identified and helped with the good support of most external agencies. The new Patrol Officers are effective in improving behaviour but have not stopped the smoking in the toilets. Students feel that the strategies put in place to counteract bullying are working. The Inclusion Team work well together to ensure that students have support and special attention when they need it.

Careers guidance is thorough and parents are well informed about their children's behaviour and progress. There is effective academic mentoring in Year 11, which is helping students to raise their attainment. Most departments are very good at setting targets and keeping a close eye on how students are progressing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. The headteacher joined the school 18 months ago, following a period of turbulence in the life of the school. He quickly took action to raise achievement, remove a budget deficit and

develop a staffing structure that would carry the school forward. He is the driving force behind developing a vision for the school. His outstanding communication and team-building skills have resulted in all members of the school community contributing to the identification of the values of respect, integrity, aspiration and responsibility. This extensive consultation process has made a significant contribution to the development of an inclusive ethos, where students feel valued and safe and where staff and student relationships are positive. These values are beginning to underpin all aspects of school life.

All members of the senior team provide high profile, sensitive and determined leadership. They have put in place a number of well designed strategies to raise achievement. These include changes to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and the use of data on students' attainment and progress to enable staff to plan effectively.

Procedures have also been introduced to involve staff throughout the school in the process of self-review and evaluation. This extensive review process, including the production of high quality subject self-evaluation forms, has led to the identification of key issues for inclusion in the school improvement plan.

Within the school's faculties, there are examples of good practice in the monitoring of teaching and learning and in the use of student data. At present, there is insufficient dissemination of effective practice throughout the school.

Senior staff and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors are hard working and committed to the school and are focused on achieving excellence. They provide a good balance of challenge and support and act productively as critical friends. The school is effective in seeking and acting upon the views of students and parents and involving them directly in school improvement initiatives, such as the development of the inclusion centre.

The school has a team of well qualified staff. It provides satisfactory value for money and makes effective use of its accommodation and resources. However, the accommodation for both physical education and the sixth form is inadequate.

The senior team is a relatively new and talented one. Members of the team are working together extremely well. They demonstrate that they have the capacity to work with students, parents, staff and governors to build on the strengths within the school and make it an outstanding one.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Chipping Sodbury School Bowling Road Chipping Sodbury BS37 6EW

Dear Students,

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all that you do.

•We believe your school is providing a satisfactory quality of education. •The headteacher and those with responsibility have your best interests in mind. They work tirelessly to ensure that you are successful in all that you do. •You play an important part in improving the school and your ideas are acted upon. •You enjoy coming to school and participate well in lessons and the out of school clubs and activities. •You are clear about the differences in the quality of the teaching between lessons that are challenging and fun and those where you are not actively involved. •Another reason for your success is that you are well cared for. •The vast majority of you and your parents are very happy with the school and all that it offers. •Becoming a specialist technology school has contributed to the higher standards you are achieving and has improved the accommodation and resources including those for ICT. We have asked your school to:

•use the existing good practice to improve the overall quality of teaching •continue to develop assessment practice so that in all subjects you know how well you are achieving and what you need to do to further raise the quality of your work.

Yours sincerely

Peter Griffiths Her Majesty's Inspector