



Forest School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110061
LEA Wokingham District Council
Inspection number 278361
Inspection dates 8 March 2006 to 9 March 2006
Reporting inspector Russell Jordan

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Robin Hood Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Winnersh
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Wokingham RG41 5NE
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01189 781626
Number on roll	1106	Fax number	01189 776018
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mark Duffelen
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Keith Quine

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 8 March 2006 - 9 March 2006	Inspection number 278361
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Forest School is a large comprehensive school for boys and has an average sized sixth form. The vast majority of students are white British with small numbers from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Asian. In 2003 Forest was designated a business and enterprise specialist school. The attainment of students on entry is above average. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Forest School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. Sound progress has been made since the previous inspection although not all of the issues identified in the last report have been tackled effectively. In addition, uneven progress has been made in the priorities identified for improvement by the school. Although the standards are good overall, students make only average progress by the end of Year 11 compared to their performance in Year 9 and their starting points on entry to the school.

Attendance is good, and the attitudes of students are generally good in class. Most students enjoy school. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school although students and parents comment on the disruption caused in some lessons and around the school by a small minority of students. Inspectors found this to be the case also. Students generally feel safe and are well supported by a team of tutors who know them well.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but inconsistent across the school. Although there are many examples of good teaching within some subjects, better practice in teaching and learning is not successfully being spread through the school because monitoring by heads of department and senior leaders is inconsistent and lacking in rigour. This results in a lack of an overall review that can be used effectively by the school to help raise achievement. It also accounts for the more optimistic view the school has of itself compared with the findings of this inspection. Nevertheless, the school has sufficient capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school is accurate in its evaluation that the effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. However, there are variations in students' performance and in the quality of teaching between different subjects. The leadership of the sixth form is improving. Guidance for students is developing appropriately and tutors are taking a growing role in the academic support of students. About 20 students also benefit considerably from support by business mentors. Students enjoy being in the sixth form and mostly approach their work conscientiously. They are constructively involved around the school and take their responsibilities seriously. They make satisfactory progress overall and examination results are slightly above the national average for all students and above the average for boys. Performance is consistently good in English, mathematics, art and media studies and improved considerably in 2005 in biology. By contrast, performance in chemistry, physics, sociology and economics has lagged behind that in other subjects.

Teaching is satisfactory overall but, as in the main school, monitoring is insufficiently rigorous to eliminate inconsistencies in practice. In the best lessons high expectations and interesting methods engage students' attention and generate good progress.

Weaker lessons lack clear objectives and teachers adopt a narrow range of methods that do not involve the students sufficiently in their own learning. The range of advanced level courses has expanded since the last inspection, but statutory requirements for religious education are not met. Many students exhibit healthy lifestyles, for example through their participation in the successful school teams, although these are not accessible to all. However, participation in physical education is optional and not monitored by the school, with the effect that some students do not take part in it.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that it is consistently at least good
- * Monitor frequently and rigorously the implementation and impact of whole school policies
- * Improve the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of subject outcomes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In Years 7 to 9, students make good progress in English, very good progress in mathematics, but only average progress in science. Standards in core subjects are significantly above the national average by Year 9 and are particularly high in mathematics. In Year 11, standards are above the national averages in English, mathematics, art and design, French and geography but are significantly below the national averages in history and information technology. The proportion of students achieving five A*-C grades, including English and mathematics, is well above the national average. The school sets challenging targets based on statistical prediction and teacher assessment and makes considerable effort to ensure that students achieve them. The rigour and effectiveness of the monitoring of students' progress are variable. The school evaluates its achievement and standards more generously than inspectors, who judge them to be satisfactory. Although standards are good overall, students make only average progress by the end of Year 11 compared to their performance in Year 9 and their starting points on entry to the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Students generally feel safe and secure, although procedures for dealing with bullying are not yet fully effective. Students have opportunities to engage in a range of moral and cultural activities in lessons, with particularly effective contributions from religious education, history, music and geography. Religious education lessons make a significant contribution to students' spiritual education although opportunities are missed in other subjects and in assemblies and tutor periods. Personal, social and health education successfully incorporates citizenship although this is provided by form tutors who have had very

little training in this aspect of the curriculum. Multicultural links are established particularly successfully through history, geography, religious education and music.

Good progress has been made on healthy eating throughout the school, partly through the efforts of an active school council. Students make sound contributions to the local community. There are examples of their involvement in charity days and Year 8 students help to organise activities for a neighbouring special needs school. Students are able to develop economic awareness through their focus on enterprise as a result of specialist school status.

Behaviour is generally good, although inspectors would agree with students' and parents' comments on the disruption caused in some lessons and around the school by a minority of students. Attendance is good, and attitudes of students are generally good in class where students work well together. Most students enjoy school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially through sport and music, although students feel that access is restricted to those who perform best.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There are, however, many examples of good and effective teaching across subjects. In the most successful lessons the teachers have very good classroom control, are enthusiastic and use a wide range of teaching and learning styles. They are aware of students' individual needs and have high expectations, ensuring that progress is good. These teachers also share very good relationships with their students. In the less successful lessons activities do not always engage or motivate the students and this has a detrimental effect on the pace of these lessons and the progress made.

Inconsistencies are also seen in lesson planning, especially in the way teachers review the learning in their lessons. The marking of students' work is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis but is variable in quality and effectiveness. Students appreciate the guidance given to them on how they could improve further by most teachers.

The school monitors teaching but the effectiveness of this initiative has been variable as not all subjects are monitored in a similar manner. This results in a lack of an overall review that can be used effectively by the school to help raise achievement and accounts for the more optimistic view of teaching held by the school than that found by inspectors.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets students' needs in most respects. A large number of visits, visitors and theme days enhance the curriculum. For example, interest in Shakespeare is increased through visits by professional actors. The curriculum is broad with a good

range of subjects taught in Years 7 to 11, but not all statutory requirements are met. The time for which the students are taught is substantially less than that in most other secondary schools in England. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. Pupils in Year 9 do not have timetabled lessons in information and communication technology (ICT) and the ICT teaching provided in other lessons is variable in its extent and quality; in Years 10 and 11 fewer than half the students take a full GCSE course in ICT. Literacy and numeracy policies are appropriate but their implementation is uneven. Very good provision is made for the most capable students through enrichment activities, but in lessons planning is sometimes inadequate. Curriculum planning for students with special educational needs is satisfactory but inconsistent in its effectiveness. Learners are well prepared for their future economic well-being because the work-related curriculum is good and an appropriate range of vocational courses is provided in Years 10 and 11. Education for health and safety is effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Care, guidance and support are good. Students generally feel safe and are well supported by a team of tutors who know them well. Health and safety issues are covered well and risk assessments are made accurately and appropriately. Child protection issues are monitored very well and there is an effective response by a nominated coordinator who receives good support from an assistant headteacher.

Tutors monitor students' progress effectively and discuss targets and assessments with them. However, there are limited opportunities for individual discussions between student and tutor. Parents receive regular reports and are involved when there is concern about a student's lack of progress. Students with special educational needs receive sound support. Planning for the development of this area is good and developing, although information is not yet used consistently by all staff to ensure appropriate progress. A good system of induction and links with primary schools, including visits by prospective students, ensures that there is a good start for all new students.

The programme of careers information, advice and guidance is sound although access to appropriate information for some students is restricted. In the sixth form guidance has led to good progression for students going to higher education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership is focused on raising standards, and the impact of this is most evident in Years 7 to 9. However, the improvements made are having an uneven impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The school knows itself overall but managers have made uneven progress in securing improvements in the areas identified for development.

Monitoring and evaluation by heads of department and senior leaders are inconsistent and lacking in rigour so that better practice in teaching and learning is not successfully being spread through the school.

Governors are supportive of the school. They are mindful of their responsibilities for holding the school to account with regard to standards and the progress made by learners. However, they have not successfully challenged the slow progress being made in ensuring that all statutory parts of the curriculum are in place. The school does not currently ensure that each student in Years 10 and 11 or in the sixth form follows the statutory curriculum. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve, but not all of the issues identified in the last report have been tackled effectively.

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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	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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	2	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?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

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?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

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?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
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	3	
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

Students

I am writing to share with you the main judgements that we made when we came to inspect your school in March. Many of you spoke to us and told us about what you are learning and about the school in general. We want to thank you for welcoming us so well and for sharing with us your views and experiences so openly.

Your attendance and attitudes are generally good in class. Most of you told us that you enjoy school. Your behaviour is good in lessons and generally around the school although a few of you need to improve your behaviour so that you can all make the most of your lessons. You told us you generally feel safe and are well supported by a team of tutors who know you well.

Your results are good overall, but we think you can do even better and make better progress. The leadership team is already aware of this and is working on things to help, but we have asked them to make sure that: * All lessons across the school are as good as the best ones * Teachers at all levels of the school monitor more frequently and carefully the improvements they are putting in place to help you all reach higher standards and make better progress * Teachers monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching you receive, the progress you are making and the standards you achieve. We enjoyed the time we spent at your school and thank you, once again for your warm welcome. We look forward to following the progress of the school.

With best wishes,

Russell Jordan

Her Majesty's Inspector