



# The Grange School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110488  
**LEA** Buckinghamshire LEA  
**Inspection number** 278444  
**Inspection dates** 26 April 2006 to 27 April 2006  
**Reporting inspector** David Benstock AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Modern (non-selective)	<b>School address</b>	Wendover Way
<b>School category</b>	Community		Aylesbury
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		HP21 7NH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01296 390900
<b>Number on roll</b>	1266	<b>Fax number</b>	01296 390991
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Mike Morrey
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 May 2004	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Vince Murray

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 26 April 2006 - 27 April 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278444
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The Grange is a larger than average secondary modern school. It caters for pupils aged 11-18 years. The socio-economic background of the pupils is broadly average although fewer than usual claim free school meals. The school serves a significant number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The percentage whose first language is believed not to be English is much higher than average. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. Fewer pupils than usual have attained higher levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6 prior to joining the school. Attainment on entry is below average. In the last inspection in May 2004 the school had serious weaknesses.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. This accords with the school's own self-evaluation and represents considerable improvement since the last inspection. Students make good progress to the end of Year 9. The school has taken effective action to improve the poor performance in last years' GCSE examinations. As a result, students in Years 10 and 11 are now making satisfactory progress in lessons although standards are not yet as high as they should be. Overall achievement is satisfactory.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. The school provides good care and support for the students. This is increasingly influential on their personal development and most evident in their vastly improved behaviour. Students respond positively in lessons and are keen to play their part in improving standards.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A considerable reduction in the turnover of staff has resulted in much improved continuity of teaching. Improvements in lessons are praised highly by students. However, not all lessons provide sufficient challenge for the more able. The curriculum is satisfactory and is being significantly revised so that students have a greater choice of subjects to fully meet their needs and aspirations.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher and his deputy have made a significant impact and achieved much in a relatively short time. Middle management is developing but is not as effective as it should be in monitoring achievement and securing rapid improvement. Governors offer considerable support and are developing their role in strategic planning. The school is part of the Aylesbury 'Leading Edge Partnership' and as such benefits from shared expertise. Partnership with external support agencies is also good. Most of the issues of the previous inspection have been addressed although religious education does not yet fully meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school's capacity to improve further is good because it has recently been successful in improving students' achievements, attitudes and behaviour.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form is satisfactory. Standards are improving. Students are offered a comprehensive range of BTEC, AVCE, GNVQ, AS and A2 courses and are beginning to use the Aylesbury Vale consortium well. Unsuccessful courses have been discontinued and more appropriate courses introduced. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. Some teaching is outstanding and this accounts for the better progress in vocational subjects. All departments set challenging examination targets and monitor individual progress well. When progress falters there are clear procedures to rectify matters but these are not always fully effective. The new leadership and management staff have commitment and vision. They have clear strategies for future development and have ensured that attitudes and attendance have improved since the last inspection although retention in some courses still remains an issue. Although improved since

the last inspection there is still too little opportunity to use ICT and religious education is still not provided for all sixth form students.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the standards and achievement of students especially in Years 10 and 11
- Ensure all teaching challenges and meets the needs of all students especially more able students.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of middle management in monitoring progress and improving achievement in all subjects.
- Ensure the provision in religious education meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are improving, especially in Years 7 to 9, but remain below the national average.

Students make good progress up to the end of Year 9 although results in English, mathematics and science do not yet reach national averages. Standards have risen in the past three years. In mathematics and science the rate of improvement has been greater than that found nationally. Lower and middle attaining students, and those with learning difficulties make good progress but more able students do not progress so well because the work they are set does not always challenge them sufficiently.

Results overall at GCSE in 2005 were very low. The poor performance was the result of a legacy of underachievement caused by difficulties in staff recruitment, ineffective behaviour management and a narrow curriculum that did not meet students' needs. However good results in art and design, business studies, design and technology, drama, English and physical education illustrate the potential for higher standards and the school's capacity to improve. Results in music were particularly weak and in science they declined further. Students with learning difficulties underachieved to the same extent as others and Pakistani boys' results were particularly low. A revised curriculum, much improved behaviour, new permanent staff and an effective senior leadership team have brought marked improvements. Students are now achieving satisfactorily in lessons and the school's record of assessments and examinations for the current Year 11 indicate a much stronger performance this year.

Achievement overall in the sixth form is satisfactory. Students following vocational courses achieve well and results are above average. Those studying advanced level subjects have not progressed so well. Most students stay for the full length of their courses.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Students benefit from the high quality of assemblies and a new personal education programme (SPACE). This is proving to be particularly effective because students were consulted over its content. They respond positively to opportunities in lessons to consider moral and social implications of their studies. Students enjoy and take pride in their school. Behaviour is satisfactory and there is a climate of harmony and good humour around the school. Behaviour is good for students in the sixth form and for most others but there is a small number of students who do not always focus properly on their work and, at times, disrupt the flow of lessons. Nevertheless, students say there has been a vast improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. One student said that, 'The school is unrecognisable from how it was two years ago'. Attendance is satisfactory and greatly improved.

Students recognise the importance of leading a healthy life-style and how to keep safe. They make a significant contribution to the school community through peer support 'buddy' and mentor systems. Students value the influence they have through the school and form councils. Students are developing satisfactory basic and social skills to help their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, questioning is well targeted work is challenging and enables all students including those with learning difficulties, to make good progress. Management of students is secure with good working relationships between adults and students. They are encouraged to think for themselves and are engaged in their learning. As one student said, 'It's good when you are included in lessons'. Such good practice is not universal in the school and in some lessons teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Some teachers do not plan lessons well enough to ensure that all groups of students, especially the more able, are given work to do that is hard enough for them. As a result, some low level chattering ensues. The vast majority of students enjoy learning. Most participate well although a minority are inclined to be too passive in learning. The quality of marking is variable across the school. Many but not all teachers write detailed comments in books to ensure students know how well they are doing and give them helpful guidance on how to improve. Teachers frequently make themselves available at lunchtime and after school to provide extra help and support.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is currently being reviewed and developed to meet the needs and interests of all students. New courses are planned for September. Despite providing enrichment days for different year groups, statutory requirements for religious education are not fully met. The school is working hard to remedy this situation. Many students support the good range of sports activities enjoying success in many competitions. The regular trips to Spain are popular; they effectively enhance and support learning in Spanish. Health education is good, as is the provision for citizenship. The school has focussed on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, with some success in Years 7 to 9, and is aware of the need to enhance the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching. Booster and revision classes provided by many subject areas are well attended, enabling students to improve specific weaker areas in different subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school cares well for its students and this has been a major factor in the great improvement in their attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Students value the way that teachers and other staff are approachable and helpful. The progress of students is monitored well. Form tutors are given assessment data for their students in order to review their progress on a termly basis. Reports to parents are clear and detailed and valuable in setting straightforward improvement targets for each subject. Systems for monitoring the attendance of students are thorough and comprehensive resulting in improvement in attendance levels from last year. The school is currently working on improving procedures to eradicate lateness. All students receive satisfactory careers guidance. Effective support is given to students who need help with their learning. Those who speak English as an additional language are given the assistance they need. Many staff operate an 'open door' policy to enable students with difficulties to seek advice and support easily. Procedures for child protection are known and understood and there are effective arrangements in place to deal with any incidents of bullying or racial harassment. There is a whole school firm commitment to treating and caring for every student as an individual.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good leadership of the headteacher and his deputy successfully provides a clear direction to the work of the school, a vision for the future and a commitment to raising standards. They have a high profile and a strong presence in the daily life of the school. Many teachers and students comment positively on recent improvements.

Effective staff development procedures are in place and the school is working hard to improve the skills of teachers. Systems for monitoring teaching, learning and assessment have been implemented but they are yet consistently effective to secure good teaching in all lessons. The quality of middle management is variable and practice in monitoring students' achievement is inconsistent. In addition to several experienced heads of department, some key new appointments have been made and well-focused support from senior management is developing greater coherence and a shared commitment to continuing improvement.

The supportive governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are diligent about students' health and safety. Through personal contacts and visits, they know well what is going on in the school. They have developed an increasingly proactive role in strategic planning.

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view of its strengths and weaknesses, which is realistic and honest. In the last year the school has made significant improvements, making a strong impact on the issues raised in the last inspection. Parents appreciate the considerable changes and the positive impact on their children's education. This indicates that the school has good capacity to continue to improve. The control of finances has improved and audit reports confirm that they are now well managed.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

Thank you for your polite and welcoming behaviour when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers. Your comments were very helpful. They enabled us to find out more about the school and what you feel is good or not so good about it.

We think your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education and has made considerable improvement over the past two years. It has good features but also aspects that need to be further improved. There are notable strengths in the school. The progress of students in Years 7 to 9 and in the 6th form vocational courses is good. Most of you enjoy being at school and attendance levels have increased. Your attitudes, behaviour and personal development have significantly improved, helped by the good support and guidance of the teachers. The curriculum is constantly under review to make sure it meets your needs and aspirations. Good partnerships with other schools are also raising the quality of the education you receive. The good leadership of the headteacher and his senior team is having a great impact on the school and many improvements have already been achieved.

As in most schools there are things to improve. The GCSE results and progress of students last year were not as good as expected but current students in Years 10 and 11 are doing better. Teachers need to make sure that the work they set challenges all of you, and that they all monitor your progress. Also the school needs to ensure you have the full opportunity to study religious education as required in all years.

We wish you all great success at the school.

David Benstock

Lead inspector