



# The Cavendish School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114605  
**LEA** East Sussex  
**Inspection number** 279426  
**Inspection dates** 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Adrian Lyons HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Eldon Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Eastbourne
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		East Sussex BN21 1UE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 731340
<b>Number on roll</b>	1004	<b>Fax number</b>	01323 739 572
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Nigel Askew
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Dawkins

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279426
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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**

This is an average size secondary school with performing arts status. The school's population is stable and there is a below average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment and leave with above average results. The school has been awarded Artsmark Gold, Investors in People, Sportsmark, and 'Committed to Careers' status. It is part of the Eastbourne and Hailsham Education Partnership.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The Cavendish is a good school which helps pupils reach their potential. Provision for the arts is outstanding. The leaders and managers put the improvement of what is on offer for pupils at the heart of their decision making. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their good quality self-evaluation. Inspection evidence supports the school's view of its success. There is a very effective governing body.

Teaching is good and pupils achieve well so that by the time they leave the school their standards are above those found nationally. One reason for pupils' good achievement is that they are very well cared for. Their personal development is given the highest priority. Links with other organisations are used extremely well to support pupils' learning and development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel they are able to achieve well. Many take part in the wide range of extra activities. The vast majority of parents and pupils are very happy with the school and all it offers, but a minority have concerns regarding their child's experience.

The school has demonstrated its strong capacity to improve by strengthening information and communication technology (ICT), increasing communication to parents, improving the performance of boys and maintaining good standards since the last inspection. This was accomplished alongside achieving performing arts college status which enabled a major improvement in resources. The accommodation is inadequate and at times is a barrier to learning and pupils' well-being. The school uses all resources well and provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- improve accommodation
- ensure the consistency of homework setting and marking
- ensure that all teachers in all lessons address the needs of different groups of learners
- implement existing plans to ensure that statutory requirements are met for citizenship and a collective act of worship.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The school's assessment is that achievement and standards are good and inspection evidence supports this. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment and by Year 9 standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national averages. Science standards have risen steadily over the past three years while those in mathematics have been maintained at a similarly high level. Those in English have fluctuated but remained above average. By Year 9 there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, the school having worked hard to overcome those that previously existed.

The GCSE examination results are significantly above average. Standards in English and mathematics are above average; those in art and design, music, physical education

and separate sciences are particularly high. Pupils make good progress from Years 7 to 11; those with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress. Progress is less consistent in English than in other subjects, with results in Year 9 external tests varying significantly from year to year, and fewer pupils than might be expected gaining A\* and A grades at GCSE.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' attitudes show that the school promotes personal development extremely well. All, including the vulnerable, feel safe and say they are well supported by adults in the school. Attendance is above national average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A minority of parents express concern over behaviour. Inspectors found that the school has good systems in place to promote good behaviour. This is manifest in the positive ethos around the school. Pupils are considerate and have positive attitudes. The school council is influential in promoting healthy living.

Wide ranging sporting and performing arts activities are popular. Out of school activities provide many opportunities for good social development through working in teams and participating in trips. Parents particularly praise the programme for able children who excel in sport. Performing arts specialist status is used very effectively to promote personal development. Pupils' contribution to the community through fund raising and performing arts activities is very good. Excellent links with primary schools exist. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is outstanding. There are excellent enterprise activities and work experience for older pupils. A comprehensive work related learning programme exists throughout the school. External agencies such as police and career advisors make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. As a result of these activities pupils are thoughtful and show great maturity, as was demonstrated in conversations with inspectors.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspection evidence supports the school's assessment of the quality of teaching and learning as good. Joint observations between inspectors and senior staff corroborated the school's judgement. A high proportion of lessons seen by inspectors were good, with some outstanding lessons and none unsatisfactory. Teaching is good because staff are well qualified and have high expectations of their pupils' successes. They manage behaviour well and motivate their pupils using a good variety of teaching methods. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities learn exceptionally well in class because of the outstanding support given to them and their teachers by learning support staff.

Most teachers use the good assessment data well to plan for the wide ability range in their classes, but sometimes work in mixed ability classes does not consistently match

the needs of all the pupils. Assessment is also used effectively to accelerate the progress of high ability, gifted and talented pupils, enabling them to take some GCSE subjects, such as mathematics and performing arts, earlier than expected. Teachers develop their pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well; an improvement since the last inspection. Many parents are pleased with the teaching their children receive, but some feel that their homework load is inconsistent and inspectors agree with this.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The school offers pupils in Years 10 and 11 a wide choice of subjects which enables them to achieve well in groups of subjects which they enjoy. A small number of pupils takes the opportunity to follow vocational courses at the local college, and the school makes good arrangements to ensure that these pupils do not miss out on English and mathematics lessons. The school is working with other schools in the town to develop further opportunities for vocational and other courses; for example, Year 10 pupils can take AS courses in drama, media studies and critical thinking. Some very exciting initiatives are being undertaken to broaden pupils' studies. For example, 25 pupils are following the sports leadership award where pupils develop the sporting skills of primary school children. All pupils in Year 9 are following an applied GCSE in performing arts, and the ablest mathematicians begin GCSE mathematics a year early. Although pupils in Years 10 and 11 have some opportunities to study citizenship, the subject is not yet meeting all the requirements.

Performing arts college status has very successfully promoted extensive community involvement. It has also had positive effects on teaching and learning in other subjects. Strong local partnerships widen pupils' opportunities within the curriculum and through extracurricular work.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good care, guidance and support derive from the high level of staff commitment in promoting pupils' health and safety. Excellent arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. They are robust, reviewed regularly and attend to every individual's needs. In this safe and supportive environment pupils strive to reach challenging targets. All pupils at risk are identified early and the school has very effective arrangements in place to keep them engaged. Links with parents and with primary schools are excellent, ensuring that pupils make good progress. All pupils, including those most at risk, are very well supported. Child protection procedures and practice are excellent, and health and safety is very effectively managed. The school is waiting for funds for toilet refurbishment. Parents and pupils are rightly concerned about the poor state of the toilets. Pupils are well informed about their decision making at the crucial stages of their education because they receive good advice and guidance about courses and careers.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspection evidence supports the school's judgement that leadership and management are good. Governors challenge senior managers very well but have made slow progress on fulfilling certain statutory responsibilities. All are effectively involved in strategic development. High standards and good achievement have been maintained. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, benefit from the school's commitment to providing equal, stimulating opportunities for academic and personal development.

A strong sense of common purpose exists amongst teaching and non teaching staff for all pupils to succeed well. Self-evaluation is well focused and effective. Parents and pupils are now properly consulted about the school's work. Improvement since the last inspection has been good except for the consistent provision of good homework. Resources of all types are well used. Some accommodation, particularly toilets, remains inadequate despite the school's efforts to secure funding. Recent difficulties in recruiting staff were successfully overcome. Professional development opportunities are extensive and very well managed for all personnel. Planning for the reorganisation of the school's workforce is well advanced.

The current curriculum review is well focused on improving older pupils' opportunities. Planning for more vocational arts courses and for accreditation of pupils' extracurricular experience is well developed.

Senior managers work closely together, providing a good model of teamwork. The school demonstrates good capacity to continue its improvement.

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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>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<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**

The Cavendish School Eldon Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 1UR

11 November 2005

Dear Pupils

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you our findings.

First of all I would like to thank you all for welcoming us to your school, for talking to us about your experiences in school, and for letting us see your work. As a result of our inspection we have found that yours is a good school.

The best features of the school are:

- the opportunities you have, especially in the arts (including drama and music), but also in sport and other activities
- the way you are helped to make good progress so that so many of you do well in your GCSEs and other tests
- the way you are cared for by staff, and the importance placed on preparing you for life as adults and the world of work
- the way the leaders in the school have found out how it could be made better and then brought about changes to improve things.

We know that while most of you and your parents are very happy with the school there are still things that could be better, and your headteacher and teachers understand this too. We know that you are rightly concerned about the toilets.

To become an even better school, it needs to:

- improve the accommodation, especially the toilets
- ensure that homework is set and marked regularly by all of your teachers
- ensure that in all of your lessons the work that is set is appropriate for you.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons HMI