



Great Baddow High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115223
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279546
Inspection dates 8 December 2005 to 9 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs. Sheila Nolan LI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Duffield Road |
| School category | Community | | CM2 9RZ |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01245265821 |
| Number on roll | 1412 | Fax number | 01245348614 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr.Graham Mundy |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 November 2000 | Headteacher | Mr. Roger Hunton |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Great Baddow High School, to the South East of Chelmsford, is much sought after by families throughout the area and remains oversubscribed. It is larger than most schools although numbers in the sixth form are close to the national average. The school has Sports College status and one in ten students is chosen for ability in physical education and sport. Few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. There is little incidence of deprivation and the number of students eligible for a free school meal is low. Very few students join or leave the school other than at standard times. Attainment on entry is broadly average and the proportion of students with special educational needs, including those with statements, is lower than average. The school hosts a special educational needs unit with 14 places for students with hearing impairment.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Great Baddow is an effective school that provides students with a good quality of education. Its sixth form is a particular strength. The unit for students with hearing impairment is outstanding. Value for money is good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the senior team, promotes a rigorous focus on school improvement. The school's evaluation of its work is honest and accurate. Governors support and challenge the school very well. Students achieve above average standards across many areas of the curriculum and make good progress from a broadly average base on joining the school. Girls and boys achieve well in relation to their starting points by the end of Year 11. Post-16 students also achieve high standards. Results in advanced (A level) examinations are in the top 25 % of schools nationally. Good teaching and the priority given to the care and support of the students are major contributory factors to the school's success. The school rightly recognises that the guidance students receive on how to improve their work in the main school does not always match the best practice in all subjects. Parents support the school well. Only a very few are concerned about the behaviour of a small number of students. The school has used its specialist status as a sports college very successfully to further the students' personal development, to extend the range of curricular experiences, and to develop teaching strategies to help boys achieve well. The school has demonstrated its strong capacity to improve. Between successive inspections it has made significant progress whilst retaining the intent to be even better. Standards in the main school and in the sixth form have continued to rise. The last inspection found few areas for improvement. These have been mainly addressed. To become even better the school recognises that it should continue its robust efforts to raise standards further in science and mathematics in the main school.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school rightly recognises that the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are excellent. Standards are well above average and students achieve very well. Students entering the sixth form receive very helpful guidance on the good range of GCE advanced supplementary (AS) and A level courses offered. The high level of support provided, particularly by the head of sixth form, is much appreciated by the students who consider her as a 'critical friend'. Consistently good teaching contributes well to students' keen enjoyment in learning so that most complete their courses. Students' personal development is excellent; all students play a very active part in school life and take part in community service. Outstanding leadership and management of the sixth form enable students, including some from the hearing impaired unit, to achieve of their best. The capacity to improve is strong and the sixth form provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to raise standards in mathematics and science - improve the quality of day-to day assessment in some lessons so that it matches the best practice in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students in the main school reach standards that are overall above those expected nationally. The majority make at least good progress. There has been a year-on-year improvement in the proportion of the students gaining five or more higher GCSE grades. Post-16 students also make very good progress. Standards in the sixth form have been consistently higher than average with students achieving particularly well in A level business studies, mathematics and physical education. Despite these encouraging results, the school rightly recognises that students do not achieve equally well in all subject areas. Examination results in English outstrip those of mathematics and science at Key Stage 4. The percentage of students obtaining grade C or better in both English and mathematics is close to national figures but too low given the students' success in other areas. Particularly successful subjects include physical education, reflecting the school's specialist status as a sports college, art and design, history, design and technology, and information and communication technology (ICT). The 2005 national test results at the end of Year 9 are well above average and show an improvement on those of the previous year in each of English, mathematics and science. Most students achieved well but made the greatest progress in English. The school has taken vigorous steps to address students' slower progress in mathematics and science. The lower attainment of boys on entry explains the gap in the performance of boys and girls at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form in last year's results. Generally, students on the school's register of special educational needs make good progress because of caring support and a literacy recovery programme. Students with hearing impairment make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school's judgement that students' personal development and well being are good in the main school and excellent in the sixth form is accurate. The majority of students enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Students are proud of their school, have generally good attitudes to learning, and appreciate their 'helpful teachers'. Behaviour round the school and in lessons is good although a very few parents consider this not to be so. Students are very clear as to rewards and sanctions for disruption or inappropriate attitudes. The well organised school council provides a good vehicle through which students are comfortable in making their views known. Students feel

their opinions count. Students shoulder responsibilities well. Particularly notable is main-stream students' sense of responsibility towards those in the hearing impaired unit. Many have learned to sign and they take care to ensure none are not left out in class activities. Students contribute to the wider community through the junior and community sports leaders' programme. Younger students mentor new arrivals to the school. Sixth form students are involved in many aspects of community service and students at all levels are generous in supporting charities. The school holds advanced accreditation as a healthy school. Students enjoy the meals cooked on site and are encouraged to make healthy choices. They benefit from a very wide range of physical activities, reflecting the impact of the sports college. The school grounds are secure and the split lunch break allows staff to ensure safety. Some students, however, do express concern over the amount of litter on the premises and the lack of cleanliness in some areas. Community links are outstanding, often facilitated through the sports specialism but also through the school's focus on business and enterprise. All Year 11 students benefit from extended work experience. The school's relentless focus on improving key skills makes a very positive contribution to future economic well-being. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although spiritual development is not planned into the curriculum and there is limited opportunity for students to reflect. A number of study days focus sharply on key elements of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Cultural development is very good with outstanding displays of art and a range of productions of music and drama. Occasional days, such as the Africa day, give students opportunities to learn about other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school rightly judges that it has sustained good quality teaching and learning across the school. Some practice is outstanding. Performance management, the school's coaching programme and the guidance of the advanced skills teacher have had a very positive impact in maintaining high expectations of classroom teachers. Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. In the very best lessons, teachers are determined to ensure that students achieve to the best of their abilities. These teachers motivate students with thoughtful lesson planning and demanding questions. Good teaching is rooted in teachers' subject knowledge and very warm relationships. Humour and the efficient use of time underpin classroom practice. As a result, students try hard and work well individually and in groups. In some lessons, however, students spend too long listening or working on one task. The needs of different abilities, including some on the school's register of special needs, are not always fully met. There are sometimes too few opportunities for structured talk and a stimulating range of activities. Lesson planning does not always routinely ensure that all teachers know clearly how much each student has understood. The quality of marking across the school remains too variable. At best it provides good guidance to students on how to improve, particularly in the sixth form, but in other year groups it can be cursory across a number of subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good quality curriculum has greater flexibility than at the time of the last inspection. A broader range of vocational options is now included at Key Stage 4. The well-considered mix of vocational and academic courses, some based at the local college, meets well the differing needs and aspirations of the Year 10 and 11 students. In the sixth form, students select from a good range of advanced level courses. The school negotiates carefully alternative pathways with other local institutions for post-16 students seeking different accreditation. All students have ready access to ICT resources outside of lesson times. The school rightly recognises that there is further scope to update and extend ICT provision in classrooms. An excellent range of sporting, social and cultural out-of-hours activities adds greatly to the students' relish for school. The school has used its specialist sports status well to increase opportunities for students to work in teams and to develop leadership skills. Through the sports college, the school has built an impressive range of links with other institutions and training providers, both at home and overseas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care guidance and support are good in the main school and excellent in the sixth form. Child protection, health and safety, and risk assessment procedures are clear. Students say they can talk freely about problems to adults. They feel respected and value being treated 'as equals'. Students emphasise that tutors 'really care'. They consider that any bullying is dealt with fairly and rapidly. Good liaison with external agencies ensures that students have access to appropriate sources of help. Personal and academic monitoring is increasingly well managed. Students have a clear understanding of their personal targets. Good academic guidance in Years 9 and 11 enables students to choose appropriate study pathways. Teachers provide good careers advice and help with university applications but students would also like Connexions to provide a stronger perspective on opportunities after leaving school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school is well led and managed. The excellent leadership of the headteacher supported by an effective senior team promotes a rigorous focus on school improvement. Equality of opportunity is very well promoted. Some other elements of leadership are also outstanding and include the direction of the sixth form, the management of the hearing impaired unit, and the running of the sports college. Excellent guidance from the school's advanced skills teacher is effective in improving aspects of teaching. The school's strong culture of self-evaluation continues to develop

through regular, detailed reviews of subjects, teachers and students and has resulted in continued improvement in overall performance. The considered use of staff development activities alongside performance targets have been important factors in developing the capacity of middle managers. Data is analysed well to highlight any likely underachievement among individual students but the school recognises clearly the need to raise awareness of the performance of different groups. The views of parents, who support the school well, and of students are sought energetically so that perceived weaknesses are remedied rapidly. The capacity of the school to secure the further improvement it seeks is strong. Governors are very well informed about the school's performance and are closely involved in its work. They are expertly led and fulfil their responsibilities well. All statutory requirements are met. The school is well staffed. Teachers appreciate the training they receive, and the school's positive, professional atmosphere. Accommodation is satisfactory, as are resources for learning. Income is adequate, and the school has received valuable extra funds. These are well spent, and regular financial management is good. The school gives good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | 1 |
| 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? | 2 | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | |
| 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 | 1 | |
| 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? | 2 | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | 1 |

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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 | |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 | |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | insufficient evidence |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 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

Thank you for being so welcoming when we inspected your school. Your comments are important to us and we valued our conversations with you. It is very pleasing to know that most of you are proud of your school. You enjoy the many opportunities it provides and as a result, you attend regularly and work hard. We agree with you that Great Baddow is a good school with many very strong features. You rightly told us that its leaders know how to make it even better. You have an exceptional headteacher and governors, and staff who are very committed to helping you learn and get the most from your school. As a result, many of you are achieving better results than expected based on your starting points. We found the sixth form particularly successful. It is excellently led and gives you a good education that leads to very good results. Your school has developed really strongly as a Sports College, and provides you with very wide range of sporting and other activities. We were glad to learn how well the school provides for its students with hearing impairment. A number of you are delighted to be able to sign and to join in conversations with the students from the unit. We think that you are well looked after in school but agree with you that some areas are not always clean enough. Your school has this in hand but we think you could also do more to prevent litter. There are two things we would especially like your school to work on. We have asked your teachers to: - continue the improvements they are making to mathematics and science. - improve some of the regular assessments of your work, for example, some marking, so that it really helps you know how to improve and that you can clearly see the progress you are making. We wish you and your school well for the future.