



West Hatch High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115321
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279572
Inspection dates 8 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Wheeldon LI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	High Road
School category	Foundation		IG7 5BT
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8504 8216
Number on roll	1258	Fax number	020 8559 2695
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Ann Miller
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Frances Howarth

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	8 March 2006 - 8 March 2006	279572

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools and one Additional Inspector. Before the inspection inspectors analysed school data and documents provided by the school. They spent one and a half days in the school, during which time they held meetings with key members of staff, governors, and pupils, visited lessons and scrutinised a wide range of documents and policies. The focus of the lesson observations was to evaluate the progress made by pupils and students and to discuss their education with them.

Description of the school

West Hatch High is a large specialist business and enterprise school. Over half the pupils come from the nearby London Borough of Redbridge and the rest from Essex. Turnover of pupils is low. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is also low, as is the number with learning difficulties and disabilities. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is slightly higher than average, but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is low. The majority of these pupils speak Panjabi, Gujarati or Bengali. The sixth form has grown since the last inspection and now has over 300 students.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with many outstanding features and it provides good value for money. The school is well led and has made good progress since the last inspection. Senior staff know its many strengths and where it needs to focus attention on further improvement. Standards are good, especially at the age of 16. Pupils make steady progress in Years 7 - 9 and good progress in Years 10 and 11. A high proportion of pupils gains at least five GCSE results at A* - C and so they are well prepared for further study or employment. The school knows it needs to further improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils and students of all ages and abilities progress at the same good rate as pupils in Years 10 and 11. While results are important in this school, so too is the development of each pupil as a well-rounded and caring person. The care guidance and support provided is outstanding as is the pupils' personal development and well being. Pupils enjoy coming to West Hatch, they behave well and make a very positive contribution to the school, and to the local and wider community. They are interested in developing a better understanding of one another's beliefs so, for example, the religious studies examination course is a popular choice at the age of 14. Pupils are reliable, trustworthy and understand the difference between right and wrong. The curriculum is very good, and at the age of 14 pupils have the opportunity of following one of four pathways, well matched to their academic or vocational aptitudes and their abilities. As a specialist business and enterprise school teachers put a good deal of time into helping pupils develop the skills they need in the workplace, to very good effect. The school has good systems for reviewing its work and senior staff know that they need to do more to improve the monitoring of pupils' progress.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

West Hatch has a very large sixth form. Provision is good, students make steady progress and standards are high. About a third of the students join the sixth form from other schools in the area. Induction arrangements are good as are arrangements for monitoring students' progress. They quickly settle into the sixth form, develop good study habits and make a very positive contribution to the community. Students enjoy life in the sixth form. One of them told inspectors that these had been the best months of his life since he joined the sixth form in September 2005. While the sixth form curriculum is good there are few opportunities for those who want to continue with vocational programmes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The attainment of pupils when they start school at West Hatch High is very much in line with the national picture. In their first three years at the school (Years 7 - 9) pupils make steady progress and overall results in tests at the age of 14 are about average

compared with those in similar schools. Pupils of this age do better in English than they do in mathematics, and less well in science. In 2005 the school exceeded its target for 14 year olds in English by a substantial margin but fell short of its target in mathematics and was well short in science. Boys and girls make much better progress during Years 10 and 11, and overall results in GCSE and other examinations are good at the age of 16. In 2005 pupils did well in religious education, history, statistics, English literature and geography, and boys did particularly well in mathematics and history. Results were below average in economics, design and technology (resistant materials), drama and physical education, and girls' results were below average in information and communication technology (ICT). In 2005 the proportion of pupils who gained five or more GCSEs at A* - C, including mathematics and English, was much higher than average and the school was very close to meeting its target for pupils aged 16. In the sixth form progress is at least satisfactory and results are good. The performance in different subjects varies. In 2005 students did well, for example, in media studies and religious studies at AS and A level, but did poorly in ICT at AS level. Whatever their backgrounds and previous levels of attainment there are no significant variations in rates of progress made by different groups of pupils at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well being of pupils is outstanding. Pupils and students really enjoy being here and their attitudes to education are very positive. Attendance levels are good, and behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and often very good. Teachers say that it is rare for lessons to be disrupted by the poor behaviour of pupils. Pupils and students feel they and their belongings are safe at the school. They say that teachers, with very useful support from partner organisations such as Essex police, have taught them to think very carefully about their own personal safety and to take sensible precautions. While pupils and students know about healthy eating they also know they do not always make the best decisions when faced, for example, with a choice between chips or more healthy foods. Pupils and students of all abilities are very well prepared and have a good understanding of current issues, for example, those relating to the use and abuse of drugs. They are very confident that advice from the school will help them make wise and well informed decisions when, in time, they are faced with crucial issues such as those relating to sex and contraception. Pupils in the main school make a very positive contribution to the community in a wide variety of ways. Furthermore, all students in the sixth form engage in some form of community work, either in the school or the neighbourhood. This voluntary work gives students a strong sense of involvement, benefits the recipients and makes a substantial contribution to the school ethos. Pupils and students also contribute to the wider community, for example, through their very close links with, and generous financial support, for a school in Sri Lanka that was badly affected by the tsunami. Pupils and students have a very good understanding of the world of business and enterprise as this permeates so much of their work. Equally, their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is exceptionally good. Pupils and students leave this school as confident,

mature, well educated and caring young people, very well equipped for the next steps in their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is generally good. However, the school knows that this overall judgement masks some teaching which is consistently outstanding and some which is satisfactory. Only very occasionally is the teaching less than satisfactory. Inspectors saw teachers using a wide variety of strategies in the lessons they visited and pupils confirmed that teachers make use of different approaches. However, in a recent survey carried out by the University of Keele and completed by over 300 pupils, pupils said they felt that teachers should use a wider variety of methods to help them with their learning. That same survey showed that eight out of every ten parents think that the amount of homework is about right, while a similar proportion of pupils felt that it was marked regularly. The good quality of teaching has a direct impact on pupils' learning. Where the teaching is very good pupils are very much on task, eager to learn, willing to pose questions and unafraid of having a stab at answering searching questions. They take a pride in their work and can explain why it is they are doing so well. At the other end of the scale pupils openly admit that they show little enthusiasm when the teaching is occasionally uninspiring.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum in the main school is excellent and in the sixth form it is good. The school's business and enterprise specialism is evident in much of the school's planning and provision. The curriculum for pupils aged 11 - 14 is broad and balanced with good specialist provision for pupils who arrive at the school with low levels of attainment, especially in English. At the age of 14 pupils are offered a choice of four pathways, depending on pupils' academic and vocational interests, and their previous attainment. Although one or two parents feel that this system has not worked in the best interests of their child it is a good arrangement, and provides pupils with courses that are well matched to aptitudes and abilities. The school's sixth form curriculum is good with a wide range of courses. However, most of these lead to examinations at AS and A level, with only a few that lead to vocational qualifications. Entry requirements are suitably rigorous. On some days the school occasionally suspends the usual timetable to focus on one aspect of learning. For example, Year 9 pupils spend two days learning about local business and industry and return to school to present their findings to the rest of the year. These days provide pupils and students with access to good specialist expertise and many focus specifically on improving enterprise capabilities. The curriculum is amply supplemented by the school's very wide range of extra-curricular

activities. This includes a huge number of visits to educational and cultural venues, and visits by a long list of outside speakers. Many of these visits and visitors are regarded as an integral part of pupils' lessons, but there are also other activities and visits that help broaden and extend learning. For example, 70 pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award, and the school fields an extensive range of team sports.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There are many outstanding features in the school's provision of care, guidance and support. The school has strong links with its partner primary schools and so has a clear picture of pupils' needs when they arrive at the school. Similarly there are very good links with the other secondary schools in the area from which students transfer into this sixth form. Pupils and students told inspectors that these links work very effectively. They find the induction they receive, and the subsequent advice and support provided by the school help them settle quickly and easily into their new surroundings. At key times, when pupils need to make decisions about future options they are provided with very good, timely information to help them make informed choices towards the end of Years 9 and 11 and in the sixth form. This information is supplemented with one-to-one support which pupils find very valuable and, where relevant, they are given further specialist advice to help them make better informed decisions. Although the current system is satisfactory, the school has started to review its arrangements for monitoring academic achievement to ensure that teachers have a more accurate picture of pupils' and students' progress, and know how this compares with their potential.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This is a well led school, and day to day management is good. Senior leaders work well as a team and their undeniable focus is on improving standards and providing high quality education. That emphasis is shared by teachers, parents and pupils and is reflected well in the school motto 'The Best that I can be'. At a broad, strategic level, planning is good and the governing body provides valuable support and challenge. The school is used to comparing itself critically with others in the area and with those of a similar nature, both by analysing data and by making visits to look at best practice. At a more operational level there are robust systems for monitoring the work of each department with a regular cycle of reviews. These reviews usefully draw on a wide range of evidence, including a departmental self-evaluation, the analysis of data, and classroom observation. These regular programmed reviews are supplemented with more frequent reviews when senior managers or middle managers identify a cause for concern. Reviews lead to the production of an action plan, and middle managers rightly feel that the school provides a good level of support to help them tackle areas for improvement. They feel that while they are very clearly held to account for the outcomes in their departments this school has a 'no blame' culture which they feel promotes a willingness to work hard to ensure improvement. This school is very good

at engaging with parents, pupils and students, and staff, and at canvassing and acting upon their opinions. A handful of parents told inspectors that they felt that this was not true, but it would be very hard to find a school doing much better. Although at times members of the senior leadership team are cautious about extolling its virtues this school knows its strengths and weaknesses and knows what and how it needs to improve further. Senior managers do not, however, give sufficient attention to the school environment.

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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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	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	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
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	1	
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	1	

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?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	2
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	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
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	2	
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	No
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

You may recall that a small team of inspectors recently visited your school. I would like to thank you for your part in making that visit so enjoyable and for talking to us so freely and honestly. West Hatch is a good school with many outstanding features. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make really good progress and results in Year 11 examinations are high, as they are in the sixth form. Of those we spoke to, nearly all of you told us that you find lessons engaging and enjoy being at this school. You are given good advice about the various choices you have to make and the range of opportunities is very good. We also found that this is a school where it is not just results that matter. West Hatch is good at preparing you for life, as caring, reliable and trustworthy young people, interested in one another's welfare and in the good of the community. The headteacher and other senior staff work well together and the school is well led. They and the teaching staff work hard to give you a good education. The headteacher, senior staff and other teachers wanted to know how they could do even better, so we have suggested two things. First, they should concentrate their efforts on making further improvements to the teaching and learning so that pupils in Years 7 - 9 and students in the sixth form make progress at the same good rate as those in Years 10 and 11. Secondly, we have suggested they keep track of your progress more closely, so you cannot let your efforts slip. This school gives you a really good start in life. Take full advantage of it! May I take this opportunity of wishing you all the very best for the future.