



The Arnewood School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116495
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279843
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Victor Chivers HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Gore Road
School category	Foundation		New Milton
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		BH25 6RS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01425625400
Number on roll	1243	Fax number	01425612036
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs E Cook
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr C C Hummerstone

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	Inspection number 279843
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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

The Arnewood School is a large 11-19 years mixed comprehensive school. It has technology specialist college status. Students are drawn from a mix of urban and rural districts, where the overall level of social deprivation is in line with the national average. Virtually all students come from a White British background. The proportions of students with learning difficulties or disabilities and with statements of special educational needs are low. The average attainment of students entering the school is consistently just above the national average. The current headteacher has been in post since January 1999.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Standards reached by students at the end of Key Stage 4 are above average and there have been recent improvements in the rate at which students make progress, especially among boys. However, between the ages of 11 and 14 students are not making the expected rate of progress consistently year-on-year. In the sixth form, standards achieved are in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement, given the wide differences in the range of attainment and a lack of well-developed study skills when the students begin their sixth form courses. In many respects, the school is successful, in particular, in promoting students' personal development and well-being. The care, support and guidance provided for students are also good. The great majority of students enjoy coming to school and feel it provides a safe environment in which to learn. They participate in a wide range of stimulating extra-curricular activities and sixth form students readily take on additional roles in and out of school. Teaching and learning are improving and are satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. The school's curriculum is relevant to students' needs and the expansion of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, to increase students' access to 14-19 pathways, has been good. The issues raised in the last inspection report have been addressed well. Standards achieved in music at Key Stage 3 are now higher. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision has been much enhanced, helping to expand students' learning opportunities. The diversity of the curriculum has been extended and significant progress has been made in promoting assessment as an integral part of learning, as well as recording and reporting. Better access to, and use of, student performance data and scrutiny of teaching and learning, have helped to improve monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance. However, there is still some way to go before these developments are fully embedded in the management processes of the school. There are many positive aspects to the leadership and management of the school and these, together with recent improvements in students' performance, make the school well placed to make further progress. Resources are generally deployed well to achieve satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Although individual subject and vocational areas achieved very good results in 2005, overall standards in the sixth form are in line with the national average. The school has an open access policy and welcomes students of a wide range of ability. Students achieve well in both academic and vocational courses. They are guided and supported well and their personal development is good. The tutor system, provision for personal, social and health education and the responsibilities taken by students in and out of school all prepare them well for higher education or the work place. Most Year 12 students continue their studies into Year 13 and the majority chooses to continue education at university. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good and these contribute to the good progress made by the students. Teachers are highly skilled in

their subject areas and provide good feedback to students on their progress. The best lessons are challenging and exciting; providing opportunities for students to learn independently. In others, there is too little opportunity for individual or group work. Some students have limited study skills and more support is needed to help develop these prior to the students entering the sixth form. Students have good access to ICT facilities and other resources are used well. A good range of academic and vocational courses are offered and students can also take national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at other centres. Progression from Key Stage 4 to vocational courses in Year 12 is well established. There is a good range of community, sport and music options. Pastoral and careers guidance is good and tutors support students through the UCAS process well. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective: the director has provision constantly under review and a clear vision for further development. Overall, provision is good.

What the school should do to improve further

* Ensure that monitoring and evaluation is rigorous and applied consistently by those with management responsibilities* In order to improve teaching, make better use of assessment information to increase the pace of students' progress* Ensure students develop their study skills as they progress through the school

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

When students enter the school in Year 7, their standards are just above the national average and remain above national averages at the end of Key Stage 3, resulting in satisfactory progress. However, for 2003 and 2004, the achievement of these students was below that expected. The school recognised this lack of progress and introduced an effective system to ensure that those students not making sufficient progress were identified and given further support. As a result, during 2005, the progress of students improved and achievement, including by students with learning difficulties and disabilities, is now satisfactory overall. Over the last three years, the proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C has been above the national average and standards have improved. This trend was maintained in 2005. However, for students taking the examinations in 2003 and 2004, the rate of progress made during Key Stages 3 and 4 was below national expectations. The school has recognised that the achievement of some students, in particular boys, has not been good enough. The school has reacted in a positive manner by giving students better support and guidance and this has resulted in a significant improvement in boys' achievement. The progress made during Key Stage 4 by students sitting the 2005 GCSE examinations was satisfactory overall and greatest in English, mathematics, art, some design and technology areas, history and drama.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students have many opportunities to develop their social and cultural awareness, in lessons and through out-of-school activities. Charity and fund-raising activities are particularly successful, enabling the students to develop their key skills and demonstrate their concern for people in need. Students' attitudes towards the school are good and in discussions they praise the efforts and support of teachers in helping them make progress. They enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for. Students and parents mentioned that there have been a few instances of bullying, but the school has dealt with these effectively. The school has a rigorous approach to students' absence. This has contributed to students' attendance improving so that it is now above the national average. The school makes a good contribution to raising students' awareness of healthy lifestyles, through assemblies and personal, social and physical education. There is an effective school council and older students have good opportunities to take on additional responsibilities within the school, as prefects and in mentoring younger students.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. A small number of outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection; most were good and none was unsatisfactory. However, the pace of learning and the progress made by students over the longer term is slower. Inspectors therefore judge the overall quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory. Teachers organise lessons well and use a wide range of learning resources, including ICT, effectively. Classroom relationships are good, ensuring that students behave well and lessons proceed briskly. Teachers know their subjects well and most adopt well-chosen methods for the courses they teach. In one GNVQ ICT lesson, students made good progress because teaching was largely based on independent and practical learning. However, in some other lessons, progress was limited by insufficient opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning. Where teaching is best, teachers make good use of assessment information to promote high standards and to keep students informed about how well they are doing. However, this good practice is not consistently in place throughout the school. In-class support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Scrutiny of teaching has enabled the senior leadership team to develop an improved grasp of teaching quality in the school. Senior managers know many of the strengths and weaknesses of teachers well and action has been taken to address weak teaching in some subjects and to address differences in the achievement levels, especially between girls and boys. Early indications are that these are having a

positive impact, but thus far there has been insufficient attention paid to the impact of teaching on students' progress, both in lessons and over the longer term.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Overall, the curriculum is good, both in the main school and in the sixth form. It has developed substantially in recent years. For example, the school has introduced a range of vocational courses at Key Stage 4. These courses reflect the school's inclusive aims and are popular with students, including some who have previously been disaffected but who now attend school more regularly and behave better. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these developments on improving students' achievement. The school works extensively with other schools and with a wide range of local businesses and organisations. There is good networking linked to the school's specialist technology college status and collaboration with the police and health professionals help the school to promote healthy living and students' safety. Work experience is well established in Year 10 and contributes well to students' future economic well being. However the school is aware that other elements of work related learning need further development. The sixth form curriculum is good and students can choose from a wide range of academic and vocational courses, in which they make good progress. Inspectors agree with the school that the wide range of enrichment activities on offer is a strength of the curriculum. Extensive opportunities for sport, drama and music, after-school clubs and educational visits, including international exchanges, all contribute significantly to students' personal development and their understanding of life in different societies. Field trips offer stimulating learning experiences and students value the wide range of enrichment activities that they enjoy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students feel very safe, because the school takes great care to ensure their safety and well-being. Students' views on issues which affect them are sought and valued and their opinions, for example, on bullying and the importance of supporting charities are taken seriously. The promotion and monitoring of health and safety is given a high priority. There are effective systems in place to manage risk assessments and governors take an active role in this. Child protection procedures are secure and all staff receive appropriate training in their implementation. The school works effectively with local support teams to address community issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse and teenage mothers are provided with good support at the on-site centre. Careers guidance is good and students' economic well being is enhanced through the employability skills they develop through work experience, organised events, the personal and social education programme and the recently introduced range of vocational courses. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Most aspects of leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the senior leadership team are providing a clear sense of direction and this has helped to create a collective sense of purpose among staff. This includes giving priority to improving teaching and learning and creating a curriculum which meets the needs of all students. Reducing variability in the achievements of students and refining inclusive practices are also key priorities. The many positive aspects of leadership and management of the school, together with the recent improvements in students' performance, make the school well placed to make further progress. The systems for monitoring and evaluation have improved markedly over the last three years and are satisfactory. There is now much better access to, and use of, a wide range of data, including the views of students and parents. Good attention is now paid to reviewing the appropriateness of the curriculum and to scrutiny of teaching quality. However, the school's self-assessment was insufficiently focused on students' outcomes, indicating that the use of evaluative processes to judge the pace at which students make progress, is not yet fully embedded in the school. In a few other areas, the school also rated its performance too highly. The school's leaders are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and the personal development and well-being of all students. The school strives to be inclusive in enabling all students to have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. This is particularly evident from the improved access to Intermediate Level vocational courses in the sixth form. The governing body is able, committed and supportive of the school and is aware of the need to improve students' achievement. Governors as a whole make a significant contribution to improvement planning and individuals play a key role in scrutinising and challenging the leadership team on students' achievements, staffing and financial issues. The school has in place a good range of partnerships, many of which are helping to broaden students' experiences and raise their self-esteem. The great majority of parents are supportive of the school.

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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	2
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	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	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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?	2	2
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	2	
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	2	
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	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	2

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	3	
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	3	
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	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

My team and I would like to thank you for your contributions to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting some of you in discussion groups and also learned a great deal from talking to you, both in lessons and around the school.

In many respects, your school is successful; we were impressed by your personal development and well-being. Your charity and fund-raising activities are particularly successful, enabling you to develop important skills, as well as demonstrating your concern for people in need. Many of you enjoy the wide range of enrichment activities, including sport, drama and music, after-school clubs, educational visits, and international exchanges. You have an effective school council and the older ones among you have good opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, as prefects or in supporting younger students. All of this contributes significantly to your wider development. The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance and the great majority of you say you enjoy coming to school and feel it provides a good place to learn. The curriculum you are offered is good and is relevant to your needs. The range of vocational courses for 14-19 year-olds is particularly popular and is even helping to motivate some of you who used to find working at school difficult. The overall quality of teaching and learning at your school is satisfactory and you receive a satisfactory education. However, while the standards reached by most of you are good, between the ages of 11 and 16 you do not all make as much progress as you should. Your headteacher and teachers are aware of this and there are signs that their recent hard work, to ensure you make quicker progress, are beginning to bear fruit. Those of you in the sixth form are already doing well.

In order for the school to improve, the teaching needs to be aimed more consistently at maximising your achievement, both in individual lessons and over the longer term. The school already provides you with many good lessons, but it needs to make sure that these occur more often across all subjects and with all year-groups. As you move through the school, you also need to be helped to develop more as independent learners, so that you take more responsibility for what you learn and how you study.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Vic Chivers

HMI