



Weydon School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125254
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 281924
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ramesh Kapadia

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Weydon Lane
School category	Community		Farnham
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		GU9 8UG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01252 725052
Number on roll	1081	Fax number	01252 717213
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Brinsden
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr J Winter

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, including three Additional Inspectors, and led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

Weydon is a comprehensive school serving the town of Farnham and surrounding areas. It has 1081 students aged 11 to 16. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is low. The percentage with special educational needs (SEN) is near the national average, including some who have a statement. The students are predominantly white, with very few from ethnic minorities. The school has specialist status in science. There were 453 responses by parents to the questionnaire.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge that this is an improving school with good capacity to improve further. Both achievement and overall effectiveness are sound, in line with the school's own view, and standards are above average. All other aspects are good, including teaching which inspectors judged to be at a higher level than the school's self evaluation. The initial self evaluation form (SEF) was not well completed and inconsistent in its judgements; additional evidence provided during the inspection shows that the senior leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Attainment in the General Certificate of Education (GCSE) is well above average in most subjects in terms of higher grades. However, a small percentage of students do not attain 5 or more graded results and some get no graded result. Achievement is satisfactory. There is variation between the core subjects: science and mathematics are strong, in comparison to English. The headteacher recognises the need for more work to be undertaken to realise the school's commitment to inclusion.

The curriculum is well designed to meet students' needs and much enhanced by the school's specialist status in science. Teaching is good, with a few examples of outstanding teaching, and is improving in English. Students' personal development and care are good, with good support for those with SEN. Attendance and behaviour are both exemplary. However, the school does not comply with statutory requirements on collective worship, limiting spiritual development.

The school is well led by the headteacher and the senior leadership team; it gives sound value for money. They are taking appropriate steps to enhance progress in key areas such as English and design and technology (DT). Middle managers are undertaking rigorous reviews of students' progress.

A strong governing body is supportive of the school and provides strategic leadership based on a set of secure performance indicators. There have been improvements over the last few years indicating that the school is poised to become increasingly effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Consolidate the steps already being taken to raise the achievement of students, particularly those who are not doing as well as their peer group.
- * Raise standards in English further.
- * Enhance spirituality in the school and meet statutory requirements on collective worship.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average and represent satisfactory achievement, in line with the school's own internal assessment. The school's intake is well above average on entry. Progress during Key Stages 3 and 4 in 2005 was satisfactory, but the progress from

Year 7 to Year 11 was below average, especially for girls, some of whom joined the school after Year 7. Students with SEN made satisfactory progress.

Test results in Year 9 in 2005 were high in mathematics and science but not in English. GCSE results were well above average with 72% of students attaining 5 or higher grades, just below the level in 2004; the percentage attaining a higher grade in English was under 70%. The percentage of students attaining 5 or more grades at GCSE was slightly above average and a relatively high percentage got no graded result. In terms of the highest grades of A* and A, students performed well in mathematics, statistics and French.

Students have good awareness of their individual targets. The school's own targets for 2006, which are carefully set, are slightly lower for Year 9 but higher for GCSE compared to 2005; systematic internal analysis indicates that the school is on track to exceed its targets. The data also indicates improvements in students' progress this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school has extremely effective systems for promoting students' personal development and well-being. Attendance is exemplary, enhancing the achievement of the majority of students. Students' outstanding behaviour and attitudes around the school and in lessons enrich their life skills. Relationships between students, teachers and other adults are very good and based on mutual respect, care and high aspirations. Students feel safe in the school; incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with sensitively. A parent consultation group, the peer support programme, the school council and the work of two school counsellors ensure all stakeholders involved with the school contribute to monitoring and improving student personal development and welfare. There are many opportunities for students to learn about keeping safe and healthy. Action taken to improve aspects of students' experience such as diet and exercise are well coordinated to have a good impact on students' perception of healthy living. There is a range of opportunities to engage with their community; the close liaison with primary schools supports students' smooth transition. Work experience and attention to basic skills ensure that students develop the skills necessary for the world of work. Spiritual, moral and social development is sound. Moral and social aspects of student experience are good; for example inspiring work in personal and social education encouraged students to explore the topical ethical issues connected with fair trade and global citizenship. Spirituality is promoted in a few schemes of work and some assemblies but, like cultural awareness, is an area for further development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Students' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding and the majority enjoy their lessons due to the effective teaching they receive. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to both engage and motivate their students. There are good systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, which includes departmental reviews as well as lesson observation; this is having a positive effect in various areas, including English. Senior leaders have a reasonably accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, which are used to target further support and training; as a result, none of the lessons seen were inadequate and over two thirds of lessons were good or outstanding. The better lessons are characterised by detailed planning, the use of a range of teaching strategies including discussion and collaborative working as seen, for example, in mathematics and physical education. Teachers ensure a lively pace of work and provide good feedback to students on their progress. Relationships are also often very good. In less effective lessons, however, the pace of work is slower and does not match the needs of all of the students in the class.

Teachers work well together and are keen to improve the quality of their teaching. They usually plan the deployment of teaching assistants in lessons and, as a result, the assistants effectively support students' learning. There are differences in the way in which lessons are delivered which means that students do not always know what they will be learning during the lesson. The school has put a focus on improving the assessment of students' work in order to make assessment a more consistent experience in all lessons. Some students are uncertain what they have to do to improve their work so that they can achieve their targets. Marking is also variable in its quality and frequency.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and meets statutory requirements. Students follow an appropriate range of subjects in Years 7 to 9 and have a reasonable range of choices in Years 10 and 11. The school is aware that it will need to review its provision in the future to ensure it reflects the range of interests of those students coming up through the school. It is also planning to introduce a personalised curriculum, which will more closely meet the individual needs of its students. Currently the provision for more able students is well met in Years 10 and 11 by enrichment options offered after school including AS courses in critical thinking and science for public understanding. Some students are appropriately provided with study support and vocational courses in conjunction with local colleges.

Schemes of work include references to literacy and numeracy, as well as science. The personal, social and health education programme is taught by specialist teachers and

helps students to be aware of issues relating to health and safe living. Students take part in work experience in Year 10 and the provision for work-related learning is satisfactory.

There is an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, which enrich the experiences of the students as do the many trips, such as those to Iceland and New York. All students are encouraged to take part in at least one activity every week and the take-up by students is monitored by staff.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care, guidance and support are provided for students. Adults involved with learning support are knowledgeable about the wide and increasing range of needs. Effective liaison between the pastoral team and management, including governors, ensures that vulnerable students, including those at risk of exclusion, have early intervention and support. Arrangements for safeguarding students are in place. Good links with external agencies provide specialist support when needed. Effective academic support is provided and includes revision and homework clubs. Good strategies support gifted and talented students. Target setting is effective. Good links with the Connexions service help to ensure that over four fifths of students go on to further education and most others go on to training or employment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are good, and better than judged internally. The recently appointed headteacher, governors and staff share a clear understanding of what has been achieved in recent years and the main priorities for the future. The governors provide effective support and good strategic leadership, using internally devised indicators of performance.

The school has undertaken effective self-evaluation to identify areas of under-achievement, which are being systematically tackled. This has resulted in better GCSE results in terms of higher grades compared with the national picture and better achievement in mathematics as well as in science, an area of weakness identified in the previous inspection. The school's specialist status as a science college, celebrated with activities during science week, has had a considerable impact on the school as a whole. Extra funding has been used to make significant improvements to facilities, the curriculum and to provide good professional development.

The school's development plan focuses on key priorities and provides a good framework for improvement. Departmental action plans are derived from the whole school priorities and rigorous departmental reviews. Finances are well-managed and ensure that the school is well-staffed with specialist teachers; value for money is satisfactory. There was a high response from parents to the questionnaire. A significant minority felt, with some justification, that they are not always consulted about key decisions, but the majority are satisfied with the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

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	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

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

Students

Thank you very much for welcoming us when we came to inspect your school on 15 and 16 March 2006 and showing us around. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing what you feel about the school. Your views are important in helping the school to become even better.

The particular strengths of the school, which we judged to be satisfactory overall with lots of good and some outstanding features, are: * by the end of Year 11, most of you do well at GCSE and go on to further education or training * teaching is good * your school is well led and you have an influence on many matters via the school council * you show your enjoyment of school by your exemplary attendance and behaviour * science week was being celebrated whilst we were there, building on the school's specialist status.

Of course, there are always things that could be better: * your progress could be further improved, especially in English * the school could do more to provide opportunities for worship in assemblies. Good luck with your work and your future.

Yours truly

Ramesh Kapadia

Her Majesty's Inspector