



# Overton Grange School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 131104  
**LEA** Sutton LEA  
**Inspection number** 282168  
**Inspection dates** 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Sean Hanan HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	36 Stanley Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Sutton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		Surrey SM2 6TQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02082392383
<b>Number on roll</b>	1276	<b>Fax number</b>	02082392382
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Brenda Morley
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr K J Osborne

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two contracted inspectors.

## Description of the school

Overton Grange School is a larger than average 11-18 comprehensive school. It is one of seven comprehensive schools out of a total of 14 grammar, faith and comprehensive schools in the London borough of Sutton. It has a sixth form of about 220 students. Most students are White-British with about one in six coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of students with special educational needs is below the national average as is the percentage entitled to free school meals. The school opened in 1997 on a new site. It is the designated resource base for hearing impairment within Sutton.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Overton Grange is a good school that provides an orderly, safe and supportive environment for its students. Attendance and behaviour are good. Students generally enjoy being at school and contribute well to the community, both inside and outside school. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged through sport and the food provided in the canteen. Students from a range of different backgrounds are valued. They are taught well, particularly in years 7, 8 and 9. Hearing impaired students and others with special educational needs are effectively supported. Teaching is good because lessons are carefully planned and provide interesting activities. However, the more able students are not always sufficiently challenged. Overall, students achieve well and make good progress. The care, guidance and support offered to students are outstanding. Leaders and managers are focused on improving what is provided for students. Inspectors broadly agreed with the overall judgements of the school. However, self-evaluation is not sufficiently self-critical when assessing strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The headteacher and a number of other senior managers are new in post. They recognise the challenges faced by the school to further improve students' progress and standards. There have been notable improvements since the last inspection. Courses available to students have been extended, information technology is being used more effectively to support students' learning and the provision for careers guidance has improved. The school's capacity to improve is good. It provides satisfactory value for money.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Provision in the sixth form is satisfactory. Most students follow AS and A level courses. Pass rates are around the national average. The numbers gaining higher grades are below the national average. Overall many students do not achieve the grades that would be expected based on their GCSE results. The sixth form is new to the school and many of the teachers were inexperienced at teaching A level when the sixth form was introduced. Teaching and learning are good and there is evidence that results are improving as teachers develop and improve their skills. For example, the percentage of students gaining higher grades rose considerably in 2005. Support for students is good. Students value the good facilities that are available and the high level of personal support they receive from teachers and tutors. The leadership of the sixth form has changed recently. It is too early to assess the impact of the change on the quality of education that students' experience.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

\* Develop a more rigorous approach to the monitoring and analysis of the quality of teaching and learning.\* Improve further the progress that students make in years 10 and 11.\* Provide greater challenge for more able students.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Overall standards are good and students make good progress. They start Year 7 with about average standards. In Years 7 to 9, students make good progress. The standards they achieve overall are high and have been so for the past five years. In mathematics and science many pupils achieve the highest levels, although this is not the case in English. Students with special educational needs make good progress. In 2004, at the end of Year 11 a high percentage of pupils gained five higher GCSE grades and a very high percentage achieved five or more graded results. These results were significantly above the national average. This was also the case in the previous two years. The school's system of tracking students' performance and setting targets helped them achieve good results. In 2004, the progress students made at GCSE was not as good as that in Years 7 to 9. In particular, boys did not perform as well as they could. In 2005, the percentage of pupils achieving five higher GCSE grades declined. The school is aware of those subjects where improvement is required at GCSE and is beginning to develop strategies to support them.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students are happy in school, enjoy their lessons and work effectively with their teachers. They feel safe and know that any concerns and issues will be addressed. They are polite, confident and well behaved. All this is reflected in their attendance and punctuality, which are both good, and in the high numbers that stay on in the sixth form. The development of students' personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. Students understand the importance of following healthy lifestyles and lessons such as citizenship help them to develop economic awareness and contribute to their cultural awareness. Students are well prepared for taking responsibility, through activities such as the school council, supporting younger students and showing visitors around the school. School trips make a valuable contribution to students' personal development and are valued by both students and staff; examples include the annual residential for Year 7 pupils and a recent visit to South Africa. Assemblies, which are based on the 'theme of the week', provide a good opportunity for reflecting on issues and thereby contribute to students' spiritual development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall, with notable strengths but also some areas that need to improve. It is better in Years 7 to 9 and in the sixth form than in GCSE

lessons. Inspectors' judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are similar to those of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan carefully and provide interesting activities. Almost all students enjoy their lessons and behave very well. Teachers use information and technology equipment, such as interactive whiteboards and digital projectors, to good effect. Students often find work presented using these resources more interesting. Relationships between teachers, support staff and the students are very good. Students from a range of different backgrounds are valued and taught effectively. Hearing impaired students and others with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Students' work is usually well marked with helpful guidance. Targets are set and students find them helpful. In a minority of lessons, particularly in GCSE lessons, there is too little questioning of students' understanding. They become passive listeners, asking few questions, and so do not make the progress they could. More able students are not always sufficiently challenged.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school curriculum is good and meets students' needs. Throughout the school there is appropriate education for all students including those with special educational needs. The school is particularly well equipped to support students who are hearing impaired. The range of vocational courses is good and has been extended recently for students in Years 10 and 11. Students' personal development is planned for well, through a wide-ranging course in citizenship, and personal, social and health education. Students' safety has a high priority. A good variety of clubs and activities are provided during the lunch period and at the end of the school day. Sports clubs are very popular, supporting the school's drive to encourage students to live healthily. Provision for physical education in the main school is good, but not all sixth formers take part in a physical education programme. Work experience for Year 10 is worthwhile and the work-related curriculum meets students' needs. Planning for enterprise is effective. Students have good opportunities to learn about how companies work and to appreciate the importance of understanding financial systems.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides a very high level of care and support for all its students. The provision for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, such as hearing impairment, is exceptional. Tutoring arrangements, including the monitoring of academic progress, are very well organised. Students are well known by the school and effective support is provided that is matched to individuals' needs. The care and support provided for students contributes very substantially to helping them succeed. Essential requirements such as those for child protection, health and safety and dealing with incidents, are in place. The strong systems in the school are further supported by the good links the school has with parents and with outside agencies. These enable the school to actively involve parents and draw on the support of external

organisations when necessary. Good induction procedures help new students settle in quickly to school. A comprehensive programme of careers education and guidance helps older pupils choose optional subjects that prepare them well for transition to work or higher education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has good leadership and management. The head teacher and most of the senior leadership team are newly appointed and share a common ethos of creating a supportive and caring environment for staff and students. Since the last inspection, students' standards, their personal development and the care, support and guidance provided, have all improved. Staff are well motivated and do their best for the students. All students are encouraged to take full part in the life of the school and to achieve their potential. The overall conclusions in the school's self-evaluation are broadly accurate. However, self-evaluation is not sufficiently self-critical and does not indicate what is needed to improve. The school recognises this and a more rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning is being implemented. Governors meet regularly and effectively support the school. The school is compliant with most legislative requirements but has yet to fully comply with the provision for collective daily worship. Links with parents are correctly recognised as an issue by the school, particularly in order to seek their views about the race relations policy. The school has good links with external agencies, including colleges, and has used these partnerships effectively to expand vocational provision and work related learning for students in years 10 and 11. Accommodation and resources are very good in most 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>	<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	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<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	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	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<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**

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work and your life in school.

\* We believe your school is a good school.\* The headteacher and the other people in the school with responsibility make decisions with your best interests at heart. Through the school council, you play your part in improving the school.\* Most of you attend regularly and behave yourselves well. \* You enjoy coming to school and you do well, particularly when the teachers make your lessons lively.\* You are all valued as individuals and you get excellent support from your teachers and tutors.\* If you have a special educational need, you are generally well looked after.\* You contribute well to the life of the school and many of you help in the local community.\* A large number of you take part in extra activities, particularly sport.

Your school needs to:\* Work with you to improve your progress in years 10 and 11.\* Provide more help for those of you who are particularly able.\* Ask more demanding questions to check that everything's going as well as it could.