



Oriel High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134042
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282430
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006
Reporting inspector David Butler HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Matthews Drive
School category	Community		Crawley
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		RH10 7XW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01293 880350
Number on roll	658	Fax number	01293 880351
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Trevor Strudwick
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Gill Smith

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 1 February 2006 - 2 February 2006	Inspection number 282430
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Oriel High School is designated as an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school. It opened in September 2004 with an intake of Year 7 and Year 8 students. Approximately 50 additional students joined the school at various times during its first year. There are now 661 students in years 7-9 who mainly live in the Maidenbower district of Crawley. Most students are of White British heritage and few have English as an additional language. The students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion with special educational needs and learning difficulties is above average

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 has achieved a great deal in a short period of time. Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that, at this stage in its development, it is providing a satisfactory standard of education and care and has some significant strengths. The school has demonstrated it is very capable of making further improvement.

The overwhelming majority of students enjoy their education and are benefiting from the excellent new accommodation and resources. The school provides a very safe environment and students are well cared for and supported. There is particularly good support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Many aspects of students' personal development are good but attendance is below what it should be. The monitoring of attendance has been hindered by unreliable electronic data. The curricular provision is strong and students benefit from the very wide range of activities offered after school. Most students are making at least satisfactory progress towards meeting their academic targets. The students generally behave well in lessons and around the school but the behaviour of a small number is unsatisfactory.

While teaching is satisfactory overall, some is outstanding and worthy of being shared more widely. Many staff are new to teaching. Although they are inexperienced, they bring an enthusiasm and vitality to their lessons and relate very well to students. Where teaching is weaker, too much time is spent in getting students' full attention and tasks are not sufficiently challenging. Students' progress is carefully monitored but individual learning targets are not sufficiently precise to be useful in bringing about improvement.

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and takes account of the views of parents and students. It works effectively with the local authority and other partners to promote the well-being of learners. It makes efficient use of its resources and provides satisfactory value for money. There is good practice amongst subject leaders but some are very new to the role and have yet to gain sufficient expertise in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the staff and students they are responsible for.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by sharing the existing good and outstanding practice in respect of ensuring students are sufficiently challenged, setting precise academic targets and managing behaviour.
- Improve the reliability of the data used to monitor students' absence and raise the level of attendance to at least the national average for secondary schools.
- Develop the expertise of subject leaders to monitor and evaluate the performance of the staff and the students they are responsible for.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students enter the school with about average standards. There is no official data available on the performance of students at Key Stage 3 as Year 9 students have yet to take the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). The evidence presented by the school shows that Year 9 students who joined the school in September 2004 are generally on track to achieve challenging targets and to obtain Key Stage 3 results that are at least in line with current national figures. The average progress of Year 9 students who joined after September 2004 is slower. The evidence gathered during this inspection shows that the students in all year groups are making satisfactory progress and achieving satisfactory standards. Students with specific learning difficulties or learning disabilities make good progress. A small number of students, mainly in Year 9, with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, are not making sufficient progress to reach their academic targets. There are no significant differences in the progress being made by boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory with a number of strengths.

The school's ethos helps the students develop a strong sense of social and moral responsibility. Their cultural development is satisfactory but the lack of opportunities for personal reflection limits their spiritual growth.

In the majority of lessons and around the school students behave well, showing respect and friendliness towards others. However, there is some poor behaviour by a small minority of students, mainly boys and particularly those in Year 9, which hinders learning in some lessons. The school has introduced more effective systems of support and sanctions and is working with the local authority and other schools to set up alternative provision where behaviour continues to be unacceptable.

Attendance is below average. Failures in the electronic system for collecting data on attendance have resulted in unreliable information for monitoring and analysing patterns of attendance. A small number of students are frequently absent or late and a few parents take their children on holiday during term time.

The vast majority of students enjoy their education and have good attitudes to learning. They adopt safe practices. Incidents of bullying or other forms of harassment are rare and dealt with rapidly and effectively when they do occur. The students' health and fitness are promoted through a good take-up of the healthy lunch option and by a strong provision for sport and physical education. The students are increasingly involved in making decisions and taking responsibility in the running of the school, for example through the school council and the prefect system. Student representatives attend governors meetings and are included in the selection procedures for appointing new staff. The students' involvement in the community is fostered through taking part in

fund raising activities, recycling projects and local events. The skills and understanding needed to cope with adulthood and employment are promoted effectively through careers education, teamwork and the development of key skills in numeracy, literacy and information technology.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and developing in strength as the unusually large number of newly qualified teachers add experience to their enthusiasm.

Some outstanding teaching was observed. For example, in a French lesson, speedy delivery, excellent use of audio tapes, visual images and the spoken word ensured that the students made rapid progress in understanding the vocabulary associated with bedroom furniture.

Teacher's strong knowledge of their subjects is reflected in their teaching. Teaching and learning benefit from the excellent accommodation and resources and effective use is made of modern technology to add zest and interest to many lessons.

Relationships between staff and students are generally very positive. Occasionally the pace of lessons is slowed by the length of time it takes to gain students' full attention. Good support is provided for students with learning difficulties and disabilities resulting in many of them making very encouraging progress. The students are generally set appropriately challenging tasks although, in some lessons, there is over repetition and insufficient emphasis on developing conceptual understanding. Marking is satisfactory but students sometimes get away with unsatisfactory presentation of work. Teachers monitor and track the students' progress towards National Curriculum levels consistently and regularly. Individual education plans for students with learning difficulties are well written and frequently reviewed. However, the learning targets for other students are often too imprecise to be useful in helping them improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and is regularly evaluated. A good balance is maintained between academic and practical subjects. The personal and social development programme equips students well to make choices about living healthily but there is insufficient coverage of some aspects of citizenship education. The very wide range of extra-curricular activities is a major strength and allows students to broaden their experiences or pursue their interests in greater depth. The students enjoy the suspended timetable days which enable them to apply and develop their skills through extended projects and team- building exercises. There is good provision for students who have learning difficulties. Those with above average academic ability are also well catered for through additional opportunities such as enrichment activities and early entry in

GCSE humanities. Planning for the Key Stage 4 curriculum is well advanced and provides students with considerable choice to meet their individual needs and aspirations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students are well cared for and supported. Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to including all students in the life of the school, with individual support lying at the core of the provision. Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust. Students at risk are well known to staff and extensive support is provided to ensure they have the best possible chance of succeeding. The school works effectively with external agencies to provide additional specialist support where needed.

There is thorough guidance for Year 9 students and their parents to help in the choice of future options, including career pathways. Parents value the contact they have with their child's learning mentor but some would welcome more direct contact with their subject teachers and more detailed written reports. The structure of the school day is rightly being reconsidered in the light of the concerns expressed by a substantial number of parents and students about the lack of a morning break and the short time students have for lunch.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory with a number of strengths. The headteacher and her senior managers provide good leadership but there is variation in the effectiveness of middle managers. It is still early days, but much has already been achieved in a short space of time and managers have coped well with the challenges involved in establishing a new school. They work effectively with governors, the local authority and other partners. The school has demonstrated it is fully capable of bringing about further improvement. The school is well staffed and has excellent facilities and resources. The local community shows growing confidence in the school. Clear policies and procedures are in place and the school is efficiently administered.

The school has a good understanding of its relative strengths and weaknesses and responds rapidly when shortcomings emerge. The school uses the evidence from its classroom monitoring and draws on the views of parents and students in evaluating how well it is doing. Account has also been taken of the external view of the school's progress provided by the local authority, which was carried out at the invitation of the headteacher and governors.

Subject coordinators are well supported by the senior leadership team and there are clear lines of accountability. Their role in managing and leading subjects is a rapidly developing one as the school expands. There is already good practice in monitoring and evaluating the performance of staff and students but this is not consistent across subjects. An unusually high proportion of teachers are in their first year of teaching. They are well supported by senior managers and subject coordinators and nearly all are proving to be effective teachers.

Governors have a good understanding of what is going on in the school and have worked hard to meet their responsibilities. All statutory policies are in place but some are very recent and there has been insufficient time to check how well they are being implemented. The school makes efficient use of its resources and provides satisfactory value for money.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	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

We were very pleased to meet so many of you when we inspected your school. Your contributions helped to give us a better understanding of the work of the school. We enjoyed our visit and appreciated the friendly and courteous welcome you gave us.

We found much that you and your teachers are rightly very proud of. Nearly all of you told us that you enjoy coming to school and that you are well cared for and given good support. You also told us how you are benefiting from the school's excellent accommodation and resources and that you enjoy the very wide range of after school activities. We agree with your views.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress towards meeting your targets and those of you who are in Year 9 should achieve results that are at least as good as those in other schools. Your behaviour is generally very good but too much time is taken up in some lessons in getting your full attention and the behaviour of a small minority of you is unsatisfactory. Several of you rightly expressed concerns about the lack of a break in the morning and the short time you have for lunch. Your headteacher told us that the timing of the school day is currently being reconsidered and that your views will continue to be sought on how it could be improved.

What could be improved?

We saw some good and some outstanding teaching and we feel this should be shared with other teachers to help them become even better.

Most of you attend well but some of you do not and this means that attendance overall is below that of other secondary schools.

Some subject leaders need to check more thoroughly how well you and the staff they are responsible for are doing. We believe that the school will be able to make these improvements and we hope you will contribute to them.