



# Chailey School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114594  
**Local Authority** East Sussex  
**Inspection number** 289985  
**Inspection date** 10 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** David Butler HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Mill Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		South Chailey
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		Lewes BN8 4PU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 890407
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	848	<b>Fax number</b>	01273 890893
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Judy Shears
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Young
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 11–16	<b>Inspection date</b> 10 October 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 289985
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Chailey is situated in a rural area north of Lewes and draws its pupils from a wide catchment area. The proportion of students from higher-income households is above average. The number of students on roll has increased by approximately one third since the school was last inspected. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average but the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. The school was designated as a specialist language school in 2002.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Chailey is a good school with outstanding features. It does not have any significant weaknesses and has good potential to improve further. Students are rightly proud of their school and enjoy their education a great deal. This is reflected in their very good attitudes to learning, excellent behaviour and good attendance. The great majority of parents are very positive about the school but a significant number feel more could be done to take account of their views.

Students make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave school. Students with learning disabilities or difficulties make excellent progress. GCSE results are above average but the school recognises that the proportion of students achieving five or more grades A\* to C should be substantially higher if challenging targets are to be met.

Students achieve well because teaching is good and they receive outstanding care, guidance and support in their learning. The peer and tutor mentoring schemes are particularly valued by students. Students find teachers very approachable and helpful in dealing with any problems they face. Relationships between students and teachers are excellent and students are very supportive of each other. As a consequence, the school has a very friendly and positive ethos.

The school is very inclusive. The support for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties or disabilities is excellent. The school has a good track record of success with students who have been excluded from other schools. Recent improvements have been made to the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners, and plans are in place for extending the vocational provision.

Students know how to lead safe and healthy lives. Their awareness of drug abuse and sexual health is developed through the curriculum and through confidential 'drop-in' sessions which provide individual advice. Healthy eating is encouraged in the canteen. There is good provision for physical education and sport in the core curriculum and through clubs.

A large proportion of students have positions of responsibility in the school as prefects, representatives on the student council or as mentors. They have opportunities to engage with the wider community but these are restricted by the rural location of the school. Students are well prepared for further education and future employment through a strong careers programme but there are limited opportunities to develop their enterprise skills.

The school's specialist designation for languages has resulted in a wide range of foreign languages being offered and an impressive array of international links that help enhance students' cultural understanding. All students study at least one foreign language at GCSE and a wide choice of languages is offered. However, until very recently the specialism has not so far been effective in driving up overall standards, as it is meant to. Measures taken to remedy this are starting to have an impact; for example, unconfirmed data shows an improvement in GCSE German results in 2006.

Good management and leadership have been key in maintaining high standards and good achievement. While headline figures for GCSE results have not risen in recent years, unconfirmed results for 2006 show improvements in subjects where support has been targeted. There have also been substantial improvements in Key Stage 3 test results, particularly in mathematics. Curriculum leaders have been made more accountable for performance in their subjects and training has been provided in evaluating teaching and learning. However, their effectiveness in using data and other information to improve teaching and learning and raise achievement varies. Although the general quality of teaching is good, it varies from outstanding to satisfactory.

The headteacher inherited a substantial budget deficit when she was appointed in 2004 and this has severely restricted spending in a time of rapidly expanding student numbers. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation but some buildings and external areas for students remain in need of attention. Students raised concerns during the inspection about ready access to drinking water, the lack of seating in outside areas and the condition of toilets.

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

- Help curriculum leaders become more effective in using data and other information to improve teaching and raise standards in their subjects.
- Strengthen arrangements for sharing good practice in teaching and learning.
- When resources allow, improve the decoration of buildings and outside areas for students.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Students join the school in Year 7 with slightly above-average attainment. They make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave school. Key Stage 3 test results and higher-grade GCSE results that include English and mathematics are significantly above average. Unconfirmed results for 2006 show headline figures for GCSE that are similar to 2005, but a substantial improvement in Key Stage 3 results, particularly in mathematics. GCSE results are below the ambitious targets set for the school and below its specialist school's targets. There is no significant underachievement by any specific group of students. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities make excellent progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students enjoy learning and school life. This is demonstrated through their good attendance and exemplary behaviour in lessons and around school. They are polite and confident young people who are keen to do well. Students respect and support each other and enjoy very good relationships with their teachers. Students have a good understanding of how to live healthy lives. They feel very safe in school. Bullying

and other forms of harassment are rare and tackled promptly when they do occur. Students are able to put their high level of social awareness into practice by participating in the school council, which has contributed to improvements in facilities. A substantial proportion of students have positions of responsibility, including being part of the prefect system that supports the smooth running of the school. Opportunities to be involved in the local community are limited by the rural nature of the school. Students' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. The school's specialist language status makes a significant contribution to students' international understanding. Students develop good levels of literacy, numeracy and social skills to help them succeed in the world of work but enterprise skills are less well developed.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall but there is some variation in quality. Some teaching is outstanding and worthy of being shared more widely. Lessons are well planned and usually involve a range of teaching and learning approaches. In some lessons students have too few opportunities to become actively engaged in discussions and contribute their own ideas. Teachers sometimes take too little account of what students can already do and do not set tasks that are appropriate for learners of differing abilities. There is good monitoring of progress and students receive helpful feedback on their work. Students comment very favourably on the accessibility and helpfulness of their teachers when they have concerns. There is particularly strong individual support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities and teachers make a real effort to make sure they are fully included in lessons.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the needs of the range of learners. All students study two languages at Key Stage 3 and at least one in Key Stage 4. A wide range of European and other languages is offered. Recent improvements have been made to the curriculum, including the provision of discrete lessons in information and communication technology and vocational options. There are plans in place to extend the programme of vocational education and the provision for enterprise education, which is currently relatively limited. There is good take-up of the school's strong programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Students rightly see the care, guidance and support provided by the school as major strengths. There is particularly good support for vulnerable students and students with learning difficulties and disabilities. For example, a very successful support group

was established for a vulnerable group of girls. Another highlight is the peer-mentoring system involving trained Year 11 students supporting younger students. Both mentors and mentees speak very favourably about the benefits it brings to them. Older students are also very complimentary about the guidance and support they receive to help them continue to further education or employment and training.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and her senior team provide a strong sense of direction for the school. They set ambitious but realistic targets that focus on raising achievement for all learners. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school based on thorough evaluation that takes account of the views of parents and students. There is a good system in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, including a programme of paired lesson observations by senior managers. Effective use has been made of outside advice to develop expertise in evaluating lessons and ensuring consistency in judgements. There is a recognition of the need to develop the skills of curriculum leaders in raising achievement in their subjects. Governors have a very good understanding of the school through their links with subjects and other frequent contacts. They are very supportive but also prepared to challenge performance. The chair of finance has worked effectively with the headteacher and business manager to ensure there are better systems in place for controlling and monitoring the budget. External auditors are now satisfied with budget procedures.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school and for the friendly and welcoming way you received us. We would like to share our findings with you.

We think that Chailey is a good school and that some aspects are outstanding. You are right to be proud of your school. Most of you make good progress in your studies because teaching is good and you have good attitudes to learning. Examination results are above average, although we agree with your headteacher that the proportion of you getting five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C should be higher. Students in the discussion groups we held told us that they felt extremely well supported and cared for and that your teachers are very approachable and helpful. We agree that this is one of the school's biggest strengths. Many of you and your parents in their questionnaire responses told us how much you enjoyed school. We were impressed by the behaviour we saw in lessons and around school and by the way you respect and care for each other.

We feel you have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Many of you contribute to the running of the school by taking on responsibilities as prefects or representatives on the school council. We were particularly interested to hear about the system of peer mentoring, which seems to be very successful.

We think the school is well managed and led. We have made the following suggestions about what the school should do to improve further.

- Help curriculum leaders to use the information they have about you to improve teaching and raise your achievement.
- Provide teachers with the opportunity to share with other teachers the things they feel work well in lessons.
- When the school has the funds, improve the decoration of building and the outside areas you use at break times.