



# Patcham High School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 114608  
**Local Authority** Brighton and Hove  
**Inspection number** 289992  
**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Christine Jones HMI

This inspection of the school 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>	Ladies Mile Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Brighton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		BN1 8PB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 503908
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1026	<b>Fax number</b>	01273 543499
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Paula Sargent
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	9–10 October 2006	289992

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Patcham High School is slightly larger than other similar schools and draws its students from some of the more socially deprived areas of the city. Few students come from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is higher than average. The school has training school status in partnership with another local school and was awarded specialist status for Arts in September 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards and achievement. The school is ineffective because standards are low and students do not make the progress they should. A key reason for this is that the overall quality of teaching and learning declined after the last inspection. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The new headteacher has been in post for a year and is well aware of the challenges facing the school. Along with a strengthened senior team and a full, supportive governing body, she is working hard to remedy the situation. In particular a strong focus on improving teaching and learning is starting to raise standards in some subjects. Although teaching is improving and is now satisfactory, there is still a wide variation in quality. While many teachers know and understand the needs of their students, in too many lessons not enough use is made of assessment information to plan the next steps in their learning. Some lessons are dull and uninspiring and not all work is matched well to the needs of the students. In both 2005 and 2006, standards were too low and students made inadequate progress at both Key Stages 3 and 4. In 2006 in Key Stage 3, there were some small improvements in standards in mathematics and science. The 2006 GCSE results rose in some subjects where teaching has improved. However, standards overall did not improve and the school did not meet its targets for students' performance at the end of Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4. Students' personal development is satisfactory. The school works well with a wide range of partners and outside agencies to look after the well-being of learners. The school strongly promotes healthy lifestyles and students are keen participants in the school's wide range of sports activities and health projects. Students are also encouraged to be involved in the wider community and there are good links with local sports clubs and youth centre. Whilst too many students are missing too much school to the detriment of their learning, attendance is monitored robustly and wide-ranging efforts to improve it are beginning to have an impact as shown by the rise in attendance figures for this term. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Developing behaviour management strategies and specialist provision are starting to improve the engagement of students with their learning. In many lessons students work hard and enjoy learning. However, a few students are more reluctant learners and sometimes disrupt the lessons; parents rightly complain about this. Curriculum provision is satisfactory and growing in breadth as planning for the school's specialist arts status is implemented. The curriculum does not yet fully meet the needs of all students but it is beginning to offer opportunities that motivate and involve students in their learning. The school has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. Although achievement is not as good as at the last inspection, the new leadership and management know what they need to do. Their evaluation and subsequent planning is honest and accurate, giving a clear view of how the school must improve. There are some early signs that this is impacting on improving achievement and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching to make learning more interesting and engaging for the students.
- Improve standards and achievement by using information on students' performance to plan for the next steps in their learning.
- Further improve the students' attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

In 2005, standards dropped significantly at both Key Stages 3 and 4. At Key Stage 3, this was largely due to a considerable drop in English results and no improvement in science and mathematics. Students made inadequate progress. At Key Stage 4, numbers of students achieving five A\*-C GCSEs fell significantly and they again made inadequate progress with girls performing particularly poorly. In 2006, standards in mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 improved in line with national levels but remained too low. Although results in English dropped overall, standards in writing improved, particularly for girls, but standards in reading dropped for both boys and girls. In Key Stage 4, the total number of students achieving five A\*-C GCSE grades did not improve, although girls' performance was better. There was considerable variation between the different subjects. Results dropped in mathematics and fell significantly in science. In other subjects where teaching is stronger, results improved and in English, languages, humanities, dance and drama, they improved significantly. In all areas except textiles the focus on arts subjects due to the school's specialist status improved results. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those with the more severe problems do better than others due to the good quality specialist support they receive. Other students sometimes underachieve as their day to day lessons do not always meet their needs.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with some good features. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Many take good advantage of the opportunities for cultural development both in this country and abroad through involvement in activities such as the longstanding links with schools in Africa. Increasing opportunities are provided in lessons for students to reflect and self-evaluate, although more could be done to extend these, for example, in tutor time. Many students think of others and realise the importance of working together both in lessons and around the school. Most enjoy being at school and have a positive attitude to their learning. Although there are some students who do not behave well, this is improving and behaviour is satisfactory overall with much good behaviour around the school. Too many students do not attend school regularly, although this has improved recently. Many students are keen members of the school community; the school council is well supported and increasingly influential. A good

example of this work is the successful introduction of the new school uniform. The contribution students make through other activities such as the Junior Sports Leader Award programme is appreciated by the wider community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The overall quality of teaching and learning has declined from the last inspection. However, the new headteacher is determined to improve teaching and raise achievement. More focused monitoring of classroom practice is having an impact and the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where teachers are enthusiastic and lessons move at a fast pace students are challenged and engaged in their learning. Training school status is being used to good effect and is developing teachers' skills. Teachers know that they need to promote students' literacy in order to improve their learning. They check that students know and understand what they are expected to do. Although planning for learning is identified by the school as a priority, not all teachers plan a sufficient range of activities. Assessment information is not always used appropriately and too many lessons do not cover the wide range of students' ability in the classes or capture students' interest. In these situations, behaviour sometimes deteriorates and students are unwilling to learn or even go to lessons. Parents raised this as an issue as they are concerned about the impact on the learning of other students. Work is usually assessed regularly and many students are aware of and keen to achieve challenging targets. Marking is mostly regular and reasonably thorough, although poorly presented books and graffiti are tolerated in too many cases. The practice of involving students in assessing their own and others' work is only just developing but is not widespread.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provided by the school has improved since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements. However, the provision does not match the particular aspirations and capabilities of some students, resulting in problems with their attendance and behaviour. The school recognises this and is making substantial revisions. For example, the addition of an increasing range of vocational courses has already widened choice. This is appreciated by those older students who are involved and, as a consequence, their behaviour and attendance are improving. Relationships with local primary schools, colleges and universities are good and are providing some students with significant opportunities beyond school. The school's specialist Arts status is providing further opportunities to extend this involvement and enhance the vocational side of the school's work in areas such as media studies. The school offers an extensive range of activities at lunchtimes and after school. Many take part in sports and games and appreciate these opportunities.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Overall, care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The pastoral system ensures that teachers respond well to students' personal needs. The school has good procedures for risk assessment and child protection. The personal, social and health education programmes place appropriate emphasis on the development of safe and healthy lifestyles. The recent focus on improving behaviour is having a significant impact on reducing the number of incidents. Vulnerable learners are identified early and effective support arrangements are put in place. The school provides a wide range of advice and support from both external agencies and its own inclusion centre, and this is having a positive impact on these students' personal development and well-being. The quality of advice and guidance relating to courses and career choices is good. Students are able to make well informed choices about the courses they take in Key Stage 4, and are clear about progression into further education, training or employment. The use of assessment information to guide students on how to improve their work is satisfactory, although practice is not consistent across all areas of the school. Good procedures for tracking pupils' progress are being developed in some areas, but are not yet used by all teachers to focus on improving students' progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The new headteacher is a strong leader with a clear vision for the way forward in raising standards and improving achievement. This vision is supported by the strengthened senior leadership team and middle managers who are developing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities for oversight of quality in their areas. Managers are more aware of areas of underperformance in teaching and most know what they need to do to improve. They are introducing a range of strategies which have already led to some measurable improvement in behaviour and learning although these have not yet had time to impact on students' achievement. The school is working hard to promote equality of opportunity for all its students but success here is limited as all students are not yet achieving as well as they should. Financial management is good and resources are well used within the restricted budget available to the school. The governors are increasingly active in the school and now have a much clearer understanding of their responsibilities in challenging the school to improve its performance.

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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>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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>	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed speaking to you and finding out your views about your school. We were impressed by the good working relationships that many of you have with your teachers and are pleased that so many of you enjoy attending school and taking part in the different activities the school provides. It is clear that the school helps you develop as individuals during your studies and we agree with you that the school helps to build your confidence. Your school council is working hard with the teachers to improve your school and we particularly liked your new smart school uniform. At the moment, your school is not effective in making sure that you all achieve as well as you can and reach the standards you should. Your new headteacher has a clear view of how the school needs to improve and is working hard to make sure you receive a good quality education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although there does need to be more emphasis in lessons on different ways for you to learn. Your teachers need to make better use of the information they have on how well you are doing in order to plan for your future lessons. Some of you do not attend school regularly enough and this affects your learning and your results in examinations and tests. The school takes good care of you, especially when you have problems, and makes sure there are lots of people to help. Many of you are very involved in the wide range of sporting and other activities the school provides for you outside of lessons. We were told by several people about your very successful performance of 'Macbeth' last term. To improve further, the school needs to focus even more on raising standards and ensuring that all of you achieve your potential. You can help with this by coming to school regularly, working hard in lessons and behaving well in school. My team and I would like to thank you for your help and cooperation during this inspection, we wish you well for the future.