



Harrow Way Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116431
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290532
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Gehane Gordelier HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Harrow Way
School category	Community		Andover
Age range of pupils	11–16		SP10 3RH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01264364533
Number on roll (school)	720	Fax number	01264336982
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Rebecca Burbidge
		Headteacher	Mr Charlie Currie
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	27–28 September 2006	290532

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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

Harrow Way is a smaller than average community school, which includes Andover Family Learning and extended provision before and after school. There is also a mobile creche service, which is managed by the governing body.

The vast majority of students are of English, white heritage and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. A small minority of students speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low, but this does not fully reflect the level of social need. The school has a fully comprehensive intake including some high attaining students; however, thirty percent of students come from an area where levels of adult literacy are very low. The percentage of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is very high.

The current headteacher has been in post for two years and there is also a new senior leadership team in place.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Harrow Way is a good and improving school. The ethos of the school is strong and staff are committed and enthusiastic. As a result the school provides a good level of education and care and students achieve well. The school is developing effective partnerships with others, and the work with feeder primary schools is exemplary. The changes within the senior management of the school have had a significant impact on whole school improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels contribute well to whole school self- evaluation and now have an accurate view of strengths and areas in need of improvement. There are rigorous systems in place to monitor and track the progress made by students and identify underachievement. The new policies and programmes are helping to raise the expectations of what students can achieve and to make learning more relevant and interesting. However, the agreed strategies have yet to become firmly embedded in the school. There are weaknesses in the use of assessment procedures and in the organisation and delivery of some of the support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities within mainstream provision.

Achievement is good and standards are average. The sharp focus on standards is leading to higher standards of attainment in both key stages. The rate of progress made by students is greater at Key Stage 3 where standards are now good. However, there is a capacity to further improve the number of students achieving 5 or more A* to C. Standards at GCSE examinations are rising and at the time of the inspection were close to the national average.

The students recognise that behaviour in the school has improved. This is mainly due to the good provision for their personal development and well-being and clear expectations. The curriculum now reflects the needs of the community more closely and students appreciate the wide range of choices available to them at Key Stage 4.

Amongst the school's many strengths is the quality of provision for the performing arts as well as the wide range of extra curricular activities. The school has increased the number of computers and students would welcome more access to this resource as a learning tool. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently well across the curriculum to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

There has been good progress since the time of the last inspection, although much of this has been achieved in the last couple of years. The school has demonstrated that its capacity to make further improvements is good. It has cleared the deficit budget from the previous year and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the consistent implementation of agreed policies including the use of individual education plans and assessment strategies.
- Extend the use of ICT to support and enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Whilst the school attracts a fully comprehensive intake, a significant number of students enter the school having attained standards that are below and in many cases well below the national average. At the end of Year 9 in 2006 the standards were at the national average and the trend has been upwards since the last inspection. This represents good achievement by the students and they make good progress in all core subjects.

The percentage of students gaining 5 A*-C in 2006 was below the national figure. The school has robust data of the attainment of the present Year 11 from modular tests and other assessment. These clearly indicate that standards are now significantly higher and are at, or very close, to the national average. This is confirmed by the observations made in lessons during the inspection. The students are now achieving well in Years 10 and 11.

The exam results for 2006 show that students did particularly well in art, drama and dance as well as in design and technology. The standards were lower in mathematics, French and music; nevertheless, standards in these areas are already improving.

The many students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress across all years and their achievement at GCSE is good.

The school undertakes detailed and effective analysis of examination data and this is used well in the school's own accurate self-evaluation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Attendance levels are slightly below national average and this is caused, in part, by a few families with severe attendance problems. Most students have good attitudes to learning and clearly enjoy school. Students do not feel that bullying is a problem and believe the school quickly deals with any incidents. Whilst many parents provide good support to their children's learning, the school is aware that, in some cases, parental support remains an issue.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although spiritual aspects are not sufficiently prominent in the curriculum. Spiritual aspects are covered in some assemblies but this is limited. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme makes a good contribution to the students' personal development. Cultural development is good, as shown through displays of art and through the varied drama productions. Occasional days, such as the Africa day, give students the chance to learn about other cultures.

Students assume responsibilities very well especially in Year 11 where there is an effective prefect system. Students work well with others, through the various mentoring schemes. The school council is effective and students are proud that they played a major part in the reintroduction of a Sports Day. However, some of the younger

students do not always feel their views are taken into account. Many students gain confidence and new skills through involvement in the many extra-curricular activities offered.

The development of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory and the school is working hard to change students' attitudes. Personal safety is good with well-planned procedures and effective links to many agencies. Students feel the school is a safe place where they can always find someone to support them. Community links are outstanding, for example through communal activities with local primary schools. The school prepares students well for later life and the extent to which the school prepares student for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In most lessons students responded very well to the pace and challenge of the teaching. Most teachers plan lessons well, using a variety of strategies and resources so that students achieve well and enjoy their lessons. Students say that they enjoy active learning with lots of practical activities. Sometimes deficiencies in resources, classroom and student management result in average or inadequate lessons. Insufficient use is made of available ICT equipment in some lessons. A few teachers find difficulty in engaging the interest of difficult boys and passive girls because the pace is too slow and opportunities for active student participation too limited. Teachers' good subject knowledge is used very well in examination classes and the library provides a good resource for learning. Students are being given more opportunity to develop skills in teamwork and independent learning. The school is now asking teachers to ensure there is more effective use of teaching assistants as well as suitable resources and tasks to match the needs of lower attaining students.

The school is proficient in setting students challenging and realistic targets and these are closely monitored by senior staff. Assessment and marking are satisfactory in most subject areas, questioning is used well and students are clear about how they can improve. There are now some good opportunities for individuals to assess their own and other's work. However, the implementation of assessment strategies is not consistently applied across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The range of subjects and vocational courses open to students in Years 10 and 11 is good. Students in Years 7 to 9 enjoy a balanced curriculum; although, provision for religious education and food technology is currently adversely affected by difficulties in the recruitment of staff in these subjects. Students are given many opportunities to develop awareness of health and environmental issues and to

develop work related skills and economic awareness. The high quality transition programme with local primary schools is particularly valuable in helping students settle into Key Stage 3. Provision for ICT is improving but its use, which could promote independent learning, is limited by lack of appropriate equipment and teacher expertise. The range and quality of extracurricular activities is good. Students benefit considerably from a wide range of trips, visits and visitors and this enriches their experience in school. The opportunity for early entry to GCSE examinations where appropriate, Zone 9 and Zone 11 activities as well as the availability of a good range of college links ensure that the school meets the individual needs of students well. Students with identified gifts and talents are supported effectively, particularly in art and drama and they are well prepared for progression to colleges or the workplace. Provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. However, individual education plans are not always used effectively in planning a curriculum that fully meets their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students are well cared for and receive good levels of support and guidance. There is good provision for the vast majority of students, especially those with specific medical or personal needs. The procedures for monitoring and supporting their conditions are very thorough.

Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and are conscientiously observed. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. As a result, students feel safe and secure.

The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator has started to address issues to improve the quality of support and guidance given to students with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, few class teachers routinely use the students' individual education plans to ensure that teaching strategies and resources are as good as they could be.

The school is rightly proud of the extended school provision. It accepts some of its students from areas of high deprivation and provides good support to a wide range of parents and students in the Andover area. There is a wide range of successful activities during the year designed to engage learners and raise their self-esteem.

The work of the school is valued by parents and this was confirmed by the many positive comments in the parent questionnaire. However, the school's work to involve parents more in their children's learning has met with limited success.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good overall and is significantly more effective since the establishment of the new management structure two years ago. There are now more rigorous systems of accountability in place and an improved

management structure, all of which are sharply focused on raising standards and challenging underachievement. The senior leadership team (SLT) has helped staff to develop a shared and agreed understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. This has led to a collective sense of responsibility towards whole school improvement. There is good whole school self-evaluation and high expectations of what staff and students can achieve.

Leaders and managers are promoting the personal development and well-being of students very effectively. Inclusion is central to the school's vision and the SLT have correctly identified this as an area in need of further improvement.

Although the school has recently developed a good range of agreed policies they are not firmly embedded throughout the school. The inconsistencies for example within assessment procedures are reducing the amount of learning in some lessons.

The vetting procedures for all adults who work with learners are robust and help to ensure that students are well taught and well cared for. The quality of governance is good. Governors are providing the school with a good balance of challenge and support. This together with the very good links which the school has developed with other providers and services is contributing well to the school's capacity to make further improvements.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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

I am writing to thank you for contributing to the inspection process and to share our findings with you. The team enjoyed the discussions we had with many of you and we were very interested in your views.

We agree with you that your school has significantly improved in the last couple of years, so much so that Harrow Way is a good and improving school. The staff at the school care a lot about you. They want to help you to be successful and enjoy learning. Those responsible for leading and managing the school are providing a clear sense of direction and helping to improve many aspects of the school's work. As a result, the curriculum has been improved and is now more interesting and relevant, standards are rising, behaviour is better and the overall quality of teaching is good.

Amongst the school's many strengths is the provision for the performing arts and the extra curricular activities. The transition programmes for students transferring from primary to secondary education are excellent. However, the school recognises that it could do even better in some aspects of its work. The inspection team has identified additional areas for improvement to help the school to become even more successful.

- To ensure that changes which have been agreed by staff are adhered to. This includes the use of student targets within lessons as well as helping you to know what to do to improve your work and encouraging you to reflect on what you are learning during lessons.
- To provide students with more opportunities to use ICT as a tool for learning across the curriculum.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all continued success and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

G Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools