



Durrington High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126083
Local Authority West Sussex
Inspection number 293462
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Marcia Headon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	The Boulevard
School category	Community		Worthing
Age range of pupils	12–16		BN13 1JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01903 244957
Number on roll (school)	1348	Fax number	01903 245079
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Angus Watts
		Headteacher	Sue Marooney
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Durrington High School is a larger-than-average secondary school with specialist status for business and enterprise. Students, who come from all areas of Worthing, are from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, but the proportion in receipt of free school meals is very low. They are mainly of White British origin, with very few whose first language is not English. The percentage with learning difficulties and disabilities is near the national average, although the number of students with a statement of special educational needs is low. The school shares its site with a special school and a residential unit.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The students are correct when they say that they attend an improving school, as Durrington High School now provides a satisfactory level of education with significant strengths in many areas of its work, and it is steadily getting better. Parents are supportive of the school and, as one parent wrote, 'Durrington offers an ever-improving education'. The strong leadership and clear vision of the headteacher have made a real difference to all aspects of the school. Since the last inspection the school has successfully gained business and enterprise specialist status and the innovative reorganisation of the school into companies has created fresh enthusiasm amongst students and staff.

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory, and both are rising. This is a result of: the close monitoring of the quality of provision; the accurate tracking of students' progress; the introduction of effective initiatives to support and guide students of all abilities; and the commitment of the staff to improvement. Teaching across the school is satisfactory, although lessons in some subjects are outstanding. Students listen attentively and participate willingly. However, not all teaching has enough variety to challenge and enthuse the students, and teachers do not always give them the opportunity to reflect before they seek answers. These factors slow the pace of learning.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students feel very safe as behaviour in and around the school has improved dramatically and is now good. They relate well to adults in the school and show courtesy and thoughtfulness to each other. They much enjoy school and take on responsibilities willingly, and many involve themselves enthusiastically in the wide range of out-of-school opportunities offered to them. Students are aware of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle, although they do not always make the most sensible choices in the food they eat. The school council takes its role very seriously and plays an important part in the life of the school. However, although there is an increasing emphasis on developing enterprise skills across all subjects, the school's specialist status has not yet had full effect. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation is accurate. The governors are very supportive of the school, are fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses and offer a good level of support and challenge to its leaders. The school works well with a wide range of agencies but has not yet established strong partnership links with the co-located special school.

The school has successfully addressed most of the issues from the last inspection but standards remain low in design and technology and the quality of marking remains inconsistent.

The school development plan identifies accurately the priorities for the future and this, combined with the incisive leadership of the senior team that has already improved the school so much, means that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the good practice which exists in the school so as to extend the range of teaching styles across all subjects.
- Ensure that marking provides guidance for students on how to improve their work.
- Embed business and enterprise skills and qualities across learning in all areas to raise standards and achievement further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are rising at the school and are now average. Achievement is satisfactory and improving.

After the last inspection in 2001, standards at GCSE fell back and remained significantly below national averages for a number of years. Although higher-attaining and average-ability students made adequate progress, students with learning difficulties and disabilities underachieved.

However, in 2006 the school achieved the best set of test and examination results for some years. In the national tests for 14-year-olds, students made good progress in mathematics and science, reached national average standards and exceeded the targets set for them. Results also improved in English, but remained below expectations at the higher levels, meaning that overall progress in English was satisfactory rather than good.

At GCSE, results have continued the upward trend which had begun in 2005. They were close to the agreed targets, although remaining a little below the national average for five A* to C passes. Achievement is satisfactory and shows steady improvement over the last two years. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities now make satisfactory progress. This is because of the overall improvement in students' behaviour and also the steps taken to improve the amount and quality of support they receive.

Students make particularly good progress in a number of subjects, notably art, physical education and drama, and standards in these subjects have been high over the past three years. However, in several design and technology subjects, students are doing significantly less well than expected. Despite being a business and enterprise college, students have not been achieving their targets in the GCSE business studies course.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' moral, social and cultural development is good. Cultural and spiritual development is satisfactory, although students are not sufficiently well prepared for living in a multicultural society. They behave well because this is encouraged and supported by staff and prefects and by the caring culture of the school. However, litter is not always put in the right place.

Most students speak highly of what the school provides, one saying, 'There is a definite community feeling'. Students attend lessons punctually and attendance is satisfactory. They behave with good regard to their own safety and that of others, as shown by a discussion in the school council that carefully considered the risks of positioning a skateboard area in different parts of the school. Students' economic well-being is satisfactory. Workplace skills are gained through work experience but the full range of enterprise skills is not yet fully embedded. Students contribute very well to the school as a community by acting as prefects or members of the school council, which itself provides an outstanding opportunity for their personal development. They also make a contribution to the local community through considerable fund raising and participating in competitions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well organised. As a result, students behave well and readily undertake the tasks set. Where students make the best progress and achieve highly, teaching provides very good opportunities for students to explore ideas for themselves and with each other and to work together. There is pace and challenge which they enjoy and there is variety in the methods of teaching employed. In lessons where progress, whilst satisfactory, is not as good, there are too few of these learning opportunities. Students sit and listen to the teacher passively without being fully engaged. The involvement of students in question-and-answer work is often limited, as is pair, group and practical work.

The school has introduced a range of assessment activities that help students to understand how well they are doing in lessons and how they can make their work better. However, while students are able to identify correctly the levels at which they are working, they are less certain about how to reach the targets set for them. Nor are these assessment activities applied consistently across all subjects. Marking of students' work in particular needs to be more informative so that students know what they need to do to improve.

The school's own monitoring process and robust use of data have identified the students who are not doing as well as expected. Additional classes and revision sessions as well as individual support help them to catch up.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum which is broad and balanced and responsive to students' needs. It is regularly reviewed and developed in order to offer good opportunities to students for future work and study. Vocational courses for older students have been introduced and are running successfully with good numbers.

Further developments in extending the range of courses on offer are planned in this area. Links with local colleges are good and enable a significant number of students to benefit from specialist courses. Higher-attaining students are well catered for through the provision of triple science GCSE and an AS-level course in art and design. Provision for citizenship is satisfactory, although the coverage of the three aspects of this subject is not evenly balanced.

The school's business and enterprise college status has seen the introduction of new courses. All Year 8 students now follow a course focused on enterprise skills, and all older students take a business and communications GCSE. Students can now follow a course in business Spanish. However, the introduction of business and enterprise skills within other subjects across the curriculum is developing more slowly.

Students speak highly of the wide range of extra-curricular sport and the many educational trips and visits which are arranged.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The provision for care, guidance and support for students is good and is having a significant impact on behaviour, standards and progress.

The school deals with any incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour speedily. Procedures for child protection and arrangements for ensuring students' safety are robust. When asked what they do if in need, one student's comment summed up the school's caring ethos: 'Everyone is always there for you and wants you to join in and enjoy school'.

Good induction support ensures a smooth transfer of primary school pupils to this large secondary school environment. Students receive timely guidance ahead of making option choices in preparation for their transfer to Year 10; this has raised their self-confidence and reduced subsequent requests for course changes. The school works closely with many different support agencies to help meet students' individual needs. Personalised support strategies successfully reduce and prevent exclusions which, however, remain high and cause concern to school. The community safety officer provides an important bridge between the school, parents and the community.

In its role as a specialist school, and as a lever to developing and influencing wider partnerships, it has provided funding to the local primary and the co-located special school to promote business and enterprise skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. Parents comment on the transformation of the school since the arrival of the headteacher. Under her purposeful leadership, significant progress has been made in creating a good learning environment where the focus is strongly on teaching and learning. The senior leadership team are

equally impressive in their drive and enthusiasm for moving the school forward. They monitor and support the work of the middle managers well. The pairing of departments within one of the new business companies has helped to overcome weaknesses and share good practice more widely.

Many of the middle managers are relatively new in post but there is a common understanding of the priorities for the school and a strong commitment to improvement. Regular communication and good systems for monitoring and evaluating performance are having a positive effect on the outcomes for students. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body takes its responsibilities seriously and fulfils them effectively. The school manages its finances well and the governors play an important role in monitoring and evaluating expenditure.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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?	3
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	3
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 very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. Inspectors particularly enjoyed attending the School Council meeting and observing how confident you were in raising issues for the benefit of your fellow students. We particularly enjoyed the displays of your work around the school.

You told the team that Durrington High School is an improving school and we agree entirely as we have judged that it provides a satisfactory level of education, with significant strengths in many areas of its work. Your headteacher gives your school a very clear sense of direction. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but it is clear your teachers provide you with good support for your learning as well as a large number of additional out-of-school activities. It was very encouraging to report on the rise in examination and test results last year. The school caters for your personal development well and we were very pleased that the behaviour in the school has now improved. We judged that the school offers older students a good variety of subjects which will prepare you well for the future.

The inspection team finds that you are making satisfactory progress and reaching overall broadly average standards. Inspectors judge that the school could improve even further by extending the range of teaching styles used in your lessons. You would benefit from more guidance on how to improve your work and we also have recommended that business and enterprise skills and qualities are included across all areas of your learning. You also can help to improve the school environment by making sure you pick up any litter.

Thank you again for being so open and talking to us and we hope that the production of 'Oh What a Lovely War' was a huge success.