

Chafford Hundred Campus - Secondary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132083
Local Authority	THURROCK
Inspection number	302322
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Jennifer Brown HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	728
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dave Wellard
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Mayflower Road Chafford Hundred Grays Essex RM16 6SA
Telephone number	01375 484580
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Age group	11–16
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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

The Chafford Hundred School was newly opened in 2001. It shares its building and facilities with a primary school. It is smaller than the average sized comprehensive school. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average. A relatively large number of students who are looked after by a local authority (LA) attend the school. The school has been a specialist Business and Enterprise college since 2004 and was awarded The Healthy Schools Standard in 2007.

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 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 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 achievement and standards and the quality of leadership and management.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate, although there are some good aspects to provision. The school does not give satisfactory value for money.

The results of the 2006 Key Stage 3 national tests and GCSE examinations were low, particularly in English at Key Stage 4 and science at Key Stage 3. Achievement and standards at ages 14 and 16 are inadequate. Students join the school in Year 7 with standards that are in line with the national average, but most do not make sufficient progress while they are at the school. Higher ability pupils make insufficient progress, particularly in science at Key Stage 3. Nevertheless, the achievement of more vulnerable students and those from minority ethnic groups is satisfactory because of the quality of support they receive.

The personal development and well-being of students are a strength of the school and are good. As a result they enjoy school, their attendance is very high and good systems are in place to ensure this continues. Behaviour is good and students of all ages are considerate towards each other both in lessons and around the school. They are keen to take advantage of the considerable range of opportunities that enable them to make a positive contribution both to their school and the wider community it serves. Students appreciate the wide range of choices the innovative curriculum offers them, although a significant proportion finds the two-hour lesson time too long. Progression routes are clear and well established and good partnership working with local post-16 providers extends the range of vocational choices available to students. Students are satisfactorily prepared for their future working lives. Although work experience provides good preparation for the world of work, students' literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are insufficiently developed.

Chafford Hundred is a very inclusive school and there is exceptional provision for the most vulnerable students, including those who are looked after by a local authority. However, the school's ability to safeguard student welfare is insecure because managers at all levels are not carrying out adequate risk assessments to ensure safety in the school. Health and safety does not have high enough status in the school and appropriate procedures and systems for health and safety are not fully effective.

Leadership and management are inadequate because the headteacher and senior managers have not secured high enough achievement at Key Stage 4 nor have they successfully raised achievement at Key Stage 3, particularly in science. The new senior management team inherited poor management information systems to inform them about most aspects of the work of the school. New systems and processes have been put in place to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation but are not yet fully embedded and consistently used across the school. Consequently, the school's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, though broadly accurate, is over-optimistic and insufficiently evaluative. Staffing in the school is more stable than it was although a significant number of staff, including middle managers, are inexperienced. Senior managers have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning, which is satisfactory, although the monitoring of students' progress in lessons is insufficiently rigorous.

There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the extent to which the needs of all students are met in lessons. The quality of governance is inadequate. The governing body is inexperienced and governors are insufficiently aware of their statutory responsibilities, particularly in relation to finance and health and safety.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of attainment and achievement, particularly in science and English.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring it consistently meets the needs of all students and challenges them.
- Improve the quality of performance information and the rigour and robustness of monitoring and evaluation by governors and managers.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle managers.
- Ensure governors and managers carry out their statutory responsibilities for health and safety.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The examination results in 2006 were the first published by the school. The proportion of students obtaining five or more GCSE grades at A*-C was close to the national average. However, the proportion obtaining five or more higher grade qualifications that included English and mathematics was significantly below the national average. Overall, the standards obtained by boys at 16 are low, whereas those for more vulnerable groups and for Indian and Black African students are well above average.

Standards vary considerably between subjects being good in mathematics, business studies, catering and sociology but poor in English, single science and the humanities GCSE. The school did not meet its specialist school targets in ICT or in the proportion of students obtaining five or more higher grade GCSEs.

Standards at Key Stage 3 are below average overall and vary considerably between subjects. They are best in English, but decline to a low level in science.

Most students do not make the progress that would be expected of them while they are at the school. Poor progress in English at Key Stage 4 was the main reason for the weak 5A*-C standards which include English and mathematics. The progress students make between the ages of 11 and 14 has declined over the last three years. While the progress of more vulnerable students, such as those who are looked after by a LA, or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory, students with higher levels of ability make insufficient progress.

A number of actions have recently been taken to address underachievement and there are some indications that they are beginning to having a positive impact in English, but more needs to be done in science. Many middle managers are new to their roles and are managing inexperienced teams of staff. Recent appointments of experienced middle managers, such as in English, have introduced good approaches which are driving up standards into the school. However, this good practice has not yet been more widely disseminated.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and are strengths of the school. Students really enjoy school and are proud of the Business and Enterprise status and what it offers them. This

is shown by their very good attendance rates. Punctuality on arrival at school and to lessons, however, is marred by a significant number of students who show no real urgency to arrive on time. Behaviour is good and benefits learning and there is a convivial atmosphere throughout the school. Students confirmed strongly that bullying and racism seldom occur and that they feel very safe. They say that the school effectively helps them to lead healthier lifestyles. Students make an outstandingly positive contribution to the community by participating in enterprising activities and raising funds for good causes. They are well prepared for their future economic well-being, but their literacy and ICT skills are underdeveloped. Students develop good personal qualities and increasing maturity as they move up through the school. Their moral, social and cultural development is good, but spiritual development is weaker.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A conducive atmosphere for learning is created through the supportive relationships teachers have with students and the good behaviour in lessons. The most effective lessons are thoroughly planned and involve challenging and varied activities. Students know what they are going to be doing and most are ready to learn. Teachers' questioning is sharp and they know each student's potential to achieve. Good summary sessions help students consolidate learning. However, in some lessons, tasks do not meet the needs of all groups of students, and the pace of learning is too slow because teachers do not expect high enough standards. Teachers are sometimes diverted by irrelevant questions and some students get bored and lose concentration when lessons lack a sharp focus.

Students generally enjoy learning and most take pride in their work. Most teachers use resources, such as ICT, well to make activities interesting and help students track their own progress. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by teachers and learning support staff. Homework arrangements do not enable the day-to-day work in lessons to be consolidated and extended. The quality of marking remains variable and does not consistently provide constructive comments and targets for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. It is innovative and creative and caters for the needs of most students. From Years 7 to 9, a topic approach, based on the Royal Society of Arts' 'Opening Minds' covers all subjects except mathematics, languages, technology, performing arts and physical education. Students say they enjoy this integrated approach, although not all like the long two-hour lessons which suit some subjects better than others. Not all teachers have the skills required to manage a thematic approach to the curriculum. Consequently, the depth of coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study, particularly in science and ICT is variable.

An exceptionally wide choice of academic and vocational subjects is available from Year 9; this is linked well with the school's specialist Business and Enterprise status and meets most students' needs. In four subjects, higher-attaining students can start AS levels in Year 11. Local and national firms give good support to the curriculum, for example, through the International Week, Young Enterprise companies and work placements. Students can choose to go to college for one day a week to study vocational subjects such as hairdressing and construction. A new

applied engineering course in Year 10 has made a successful start, and there are good new courses in food industry and technology for younger students.

The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of clubs including sports, music, dramatic productions, mathematics clubs and charity fund-raising, and students' participation in these is high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school offers satisfactory care, guidance and support to its students. Good quality care is provided in a supportive learning environment in which students thrive. Students have great confidence in the wide variety of support available should they feel at risk. Induction arrangements are good and there are effective links and advice to ensure a smooth transfer to colleges at age 16. Careers education and guidance is good. Support for students' wide range of learning difficulties, disability and vulnerability is a particular strength. The arrangements for child protection, and looked after children are good, and safeguarding fully meets statutory requirements. Although inspectors did not see any unsafe practice the school has not carried out the necessary procedures to ensure good health and safety throughout the school.

The monitoring of academic performance is at an early stage and the impact on improving achievement is not yet clear. The '1:1' sessions with tutors are useful but do not sufficiently challenge students to achieve higher levels. Students reported that although academic support and guidance varied, it was adequate overall.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management have achieved successful outcomes for students in terms of their good personal development, but are inadequate overall because students do not achieve well enough. Until recently performance management was weak. The school lacked adequate information about most aspects of its work to inform senior managers and governors about how well it was doing. Consequently, the disappointing 2006 GCSE results were not expected, especially as the students achieved well in their tests when they were aged 14. The headteacher and his team have worked hard to improve the quality of management information. They have introduced a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation so managers are better informed about the progress students are making. New accountability systems have been put in place and line management formalised and strengthened. The robustness of these new systems has yet to be tested as managers at all levels are at an early stage in using data to set and monitor the achievement of challenging targets for improving standards. However, these sensible steps demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The quality of middle management is variable. Many middle managers lack experience and are leading inexperienced teams. Recent appointments have strengthened the middle management team and are providing good role models for less experienced managers. Currently, middle managers are insufficiently involved in the evaluation of achievement and the quality of provision in their areas.

The quality of governance is inadequate. Many of the governors are new to the role and still have to develop a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the skills to carry

them out. While governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths, they have not fully developed robust and systematic approaches to holding the school to account in all areas of its work.

Financial management is inadequate and the school provides poor value for money. Steps have been taken to address the school's budget deficit and ensure governors carry out their responsibilities more effectively. Management information has been improved and middle managers are being made more accountable for their spending.

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Annex A

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?	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	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ 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

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	1
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?	3

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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
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	4
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

2 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Chafford Hundred Campus- Secondary School, Thurrock, RM16 6SA

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. The inspection team was impressed by the pride you have both in your school and in your appearance. The atmosphere within the school is very friendly and you show good consideration towards each other and to adults and visitors in the school. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and appreciate the wide range of choices that you have in the curriculum.

We were very concerned that standards at the school are too low and most of you are not making the progress you should while you are at the school. I have asked the headteacher and the governors to:

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in science and English.
- Improve the quality of learning by raising expectations throughout the school.
- Improve the ways in which all aspects of the school's performance are monitored and evaluated.
- Make sure that all staff carry out their responsibilities for health and safety.

Mr Tomlinson has been working very hard with other senior managers to improve the situation at the school. You must also play your part by making sure you are punctual to school and to lessons and follow the advice of your teachers about how to improve the quality of your work to ensure you can achieve the very best you can. The school will be inspected again in a year's time, and may be visited before, so inspectors can be certain that the improvements we expect have occurred.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector