

Chamberlayne Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116454
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	312320
Inspection dates	9–10 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Whittaker

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	701
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Shaw
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Tickleford Drive Weston Southampton SO19 9QP
Telephone number	02380 447820
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chamberlayne Park School is a specialist performing arts school. It is a smaller than average school. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above that in most schools.

There are slightly more boys than girls in the school and most students come from white, British backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

A comment from one parent correctly reflects the changes being made at the school: 'There has been an improvement in teaching and students' behaviour over the last year'. Chamberlayne Park School is a satisfactory school. It has made significant progress over the last year. Prior to that, the school went through a long period of turbulence as a result of significant staff change. Students' achievements declined during this period due to inconsistency in the overall quality of teaching and the behaviour of some students. However, there has been good improvement since January 2007 with the stability of staffing improving significantly. External results in 2007 showed well below average standards and inadequate achievement. This was the result of a legacy of the previous years' disruptions. However, better data analysis and tracking of students' progress showed an improving picture in Years 7 and 8 and for students following GCSE courses in Year 10. This upward trend has continued so that the school's evidence now indicates that most students are on track to achieve their challenging targets. This represents satisfactory achievement overall.

Effective monitoring of teaching, and targeted support and training for teachers have improved the quality of teaching, which is now satisfactory. Lessons are more focused on learning. As a result, the rate of progress has improved. However, in some lessons teachers do not ensure that work is sufficiently well matched to the needs of all students.

Most parents are strongly supportive of the school's drive for improvement. Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Behaviour has improved significantly and is now satisfactory. Many students behave well and attend regularly because they enjoy school. However, a small minority misbehave if not engaged in lessons. Students are particularly keen on the rich opportunities for out-of-hours activities such as in sports and performing arts. They take responsibilities seriously and some provide good service to the smooth running of the school in their role as prefects. The school's specialist performing arts status provides opportunities for some students to develop their confidence through taking part in regular productions. Students leave school with many positive personal qualities but their well below average standards in basic skills mean that, overall, they are poorly prepared for the next stage of their education. There are secure systems to ensure that students learn in a safe environment. The school has improving systems for the collection, analysis and use of assessment data. However, the school does not consistently use the system so that all students are guided on the next steps of their learning.

The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction for improvement. She is effectively supported by the senior team and governors. Most middle managers have an accurate understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses though their effectiveness is not consistent. The positive effects of senior leadership are increasingly evident in the improving quality of teaching and learning and in the more positive attitudes of students. This has resulted in improved achievement. Inclusion is a strong feature of the school with strategies introduced to ensure that all students' progress is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money and the capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable teachers to plan work, which more closely matches students' prior learning and so raise standards.
- Achieve greater consistency in the effective leadership and management of middle managers.

- Improve behaviour of a minority of students by ensuring that behaviour management procedures are applied in all lessons.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below the national average. When judged against below average standards on entry to the school this represents satisfactory achievement.

There had been a recent history of underachievement across the school, caused by staffing difficulties and lack of robust monitoring systems. This led to well below average results in the 2007 national tests for students in Year 9. Standards at GCSE in 2007 were also well below average but showed a slight improvement over those of previous years, especially in mathematics. Improved assessment and tracking procedures, supported by inspection evidence, show that standards are beginning to rise and underachievement has been eliminated.

In the last year there has been a significant improvement in the collection of assessment data. It is now being used more effectively to support individual monitoring of students, especially in Year 11. The evidence now indicates that results are on track to improve in 2008. Improving teaching and learning, supported by good tracking of individual students' progress, is also helping them to make better progress. The progress of all groups of students, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, gifted and talented students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is in line with the rest of the students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Many students enjoy school and are increasingly taking up the opportunities to join in with a wide range of sports and performing arts activities. One summed up the views of many in saying, 'This is a much happier school, where teachers care for you'. Students enjoy practical subjects, like drama and dance, which are helping to develop their independence and confidence. Students show some understanding of the importance of a healthy way of living. However, they now need to take more responsibility for adopting a healthy lifestyle. Most students have responded well to the school's encouragement to raise attendance and the standard of behaviour. Attendance is now close to matching that in most schools. A small minority of students are still disrupting the rate of learning in a few lessons, although the school's records show that this has significantly reduced.

Students make a satisfactory contribution to school life and the wider community. The school prefects are proud that the school values their role and are increasingly supporting the smooth running of the school. Many students are involved in voluntary activities within the community. Students help to share the value of the school's specialist status by visiting local primary schools and taking part in the varied number of school productions. Students leave school with many positive personal qualities but their below average standards in basic skills mean that, overall, they are poorly prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are effective systems for monitoring teaching and learning so that the school knows where improvement has taken place and where further development is needed. In good lessons, students are involved in activities which help them to take responsibility for their learning. However, there is still some inconsistency in the matching of resources, tasks and learning objectives to meet the needs of all students. In a few lessons, this causes students to move off task and their behaviour deteriorates.

Recent introduction of regular setting of homework, involvement of parents and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are all helping to promote more effective learning. Assessment and marking are improving because the school has introduced a rigorous system of work sampling. However, there is still too much inconsistency in the quality of marking. Students are clear about their target grades with level descriptors displayed in many classrooms. However, not all lessons are planned so that assessment is used to promote learning. Students are, therefore, not always clear about what they can do and how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. A 'learning to learn' course has been introduced in Year 7 to help students become more confident learners and develop their literacy skills. This helps them to access a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are given satisfactory support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through additional curriculum time. A wide range of options is available to students in Years 10 and 11, including a range of vocational courses on site and at local colleges. Some students are taking GCSE courses in English and dance in Year 10 and AS examination courses in Year 11. BTEC physical education courses have been introduced as a result of the school's specialist performing arts status. However, the recent changes have not yet had time to impact fully on raising standards.

There are opportunities to develop work related skills and provision for ICT has improved. Developing strengths in the planning and evaluation of the curriculum are helping to ensure that students are better prepared for progression to college or employment. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is good with increasing numbers of students regularly taking part.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its students. Procedures to ensure their safety are comprehensive and effective. Teachers complement this by giving students good guidance on how to avoid the risks they might face as they grow up. As a result, students feel safe and know how to ensure this for themselves and others. The school carefully identifies the needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and works well with partners to support their well-being. Therefore, students with learning needs make as much progress as their classmates. The school's leaders have effectively promoted appropriate behaviour. Students know what is expected of them and are fully aware of the consequences

of disruptive behaviour. In addition to sanctions, students with behavioural problems now receive good additional support and guidance. The school has reduced the absence rate by efficiently working with outside agencies.

Regular and comprehensive assessment is providing good information on each student's progress. The impact on achievement is not yet fully seen, because the use of assessment information to guide students on the next steps in their learning is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Effective self-evaluation procedures are used to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Monitoring of teaching and learning is improving the students' learning experiences, although inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain.

The senior leadership team is focused on raising attainment. Good use is being made of local authority support. Most middle managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and share a common purpose of improvement, though their effectiveness is not consistent. Overall, the legacy of students' underachievement is being addressed and standards are improving.

This is an inclusive school and equality of opportunity in the curriculum is promoted well so that learners' achievement is improving. The school's specialist status has broadened the provision in performing arts and closer liaison with feeder schools is fostering improved levels of attainment.

A committed governing body supports the effective chair of governors. It recognises that there is now a need to introduce procedures to make the school more accountable for its work. The views of both parents and students are frequently considered and have influenced the way the school operates. Many parents are supportive of the work of the school. However, there are some who feel that behaviour is still disrupting learning in some lessons.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Chamberlayne Park School, Southampton, SO19 9QP

Following our visit to Chamberlayne Park School, we would like to share our findings with you. We thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and for the helpful way you talked to us about your school and your work. We are pleased that you enjoy school and the many opportunities it provides, particularly the after-school activities. We are equally pleased that most of you are now behaving much better in class and around the site. However, we would like to see an improvement by the minority of you who are still reluctant to settle to your work in lessons. Standards in national tests and examinations are improving but are still not as good as they should be. However, your progress continues to improve and is now satisfactory. We can now report to you that the Chamberlayne Park School is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education.

The school is a happy and friendly community where everyone is valued equally. Your teachers are very committed to helping you and they look after you well. Your headteacher is working very hard, with the rest of the staff, to give you more opportunities to learn as well as you can.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to focus on improving their teaching so that you all achieve as well as you can and become more independent learners. We have also asked the staff to ensure that the leadership and management of the school are consistent across all departments.

We wish you all the best for your future success.

Roger Whittaker

Lead Inspector