

The Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116494
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312339
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Massey HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	982
6th form	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Galliford
Headteacher	Mrs C J Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2004
School address	Salisbury Road Fordingbridge SP6 1EZ
Telephone number	01425 652039
Fax number	01425 656625

Age group	11-19
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Inspection number	312339

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, care guidance and support, teachers' use of marking and the quality of feedback given to pupils, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, provision for teaching citizenship and leadership and management with an emphasis on the role of middle managers in improving achievement. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Burgate School and sixth form centre is a popular, average-sized school serving the small town of Fordingbridge and a rural area close to the New Forest. About 30% of students in the main school and 53% in the sixth form come from outside the catchment area. In the main school there are a higher number of boys than girls. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups or with a first language other than English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average.

Numbers in the sixth form are increasing rapidly and a new sixth form building is due to open in May 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Burgate has exceeded all our expectations'. This is how one parent described the school and many others confirmed this view. The clear vision and personal involvement of the headteacher in the school's day-to-day activities, mean that pupils understand well the high expectations she has of them. The senior management team, teaching and support staff work together as a very effective team to provide a cooperative, calm and happy atmosphere that enables pupils to learn effectively. The school's rule of 'respect for each other and respect for property' is evident both in the attitudes of pupils towards one another and in the well looked after buildings. One parent wrote, 'Students are encouraged to be respectful and take a pride in their appearance'. High attendance rates and exemplary behaviour show that pupils enjoy being at school. All the pupils we spoke to were confident, articulate and positive in their attitudes. One parent of a Year 10 pupil said, 'Our child looks forward to going to school every day and thrives on the praise of all the staff.'

A common sense of purpose is generated through a strong sense of community within the school, although there is scope for improvement in links both between the main school and the sixth form and with the local community. Regular assemblies and a sound personal health and social education programme, mean that pupils' attitudes towards spiritual, moral and social issues are very good. In this mono-ethnic school however, there is little preparation of pupils for life in a diverse and multicultural society, although international links are developing, particularly with fund raising towards building a school in Benin in Nigeria.

Pupils enter the school with slightly above average attainment and make good progress, so by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11, they achieve GCSE results that are well above the national average. Progress is slightly better in Years 7, 8 and 9 than in Years 10 and 11. In 2007, the gap between girls and boys' achievement widened, particularly in English, although attainment was still well above national levels. Strategies for tackling this difference are already in place. Pupils make very good progress in English, and the progress they make in science has improved steadily over a number of years, but they do less well in mathematics. The number of pupils achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics fell slightly in 2007, but remains well above the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress because they receive focused and well targeted support.

The school's good achievement is a result of good teaching. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and track their progress carefully. Underachieving pupils are identified quickly and appropriate measures are put in place to support them. The consistently high achievement and exceptional progress made by most pupils in English, is sustained through regular, constructive feedback to pupils as well as some outstanding teaching. In some other subjects, pupils do not always know exactly what they need to do in order to improve. The quality and value of marking and feedback on pupils' work is dependent on the individual teacher, and advice is often not sufficiently subject specific. In response to recommendations at the time of the last inspection, a staged strategy is in place to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. Although this approach is already having an effect, the principle is not yet sufficiently embedded into teaching.

Nearly every pupil in Year 11 in 2007 obtained five A*-G grades at GCSE. This, along with very good attendance, indicates that the curriculum matches the aptitudes and aspirations of pupils.

All pupils are now taught information and communication technology (ICT) as a separate subject, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection. The time allocated for teaching citizenship is not adequate and the school does not meet the statutory requirement for religious education, but there are plans to have this in place by September 2008.

The care and support provided by staff to pupils is exceptional. One parent wrote, 'The care the school has shown both to us as parents and to our son as pupil has been second to none.' The pastoral system is very effective and there are very good systems for monitoring all aspects of achievement and progress through the year group and house systems. Pupils feel safe, are confident that bullying issues will be sorted out quickly and know that there is always someone to turn to if there is a problem. One pupil, explaining that she had had some difficult times, described the support from staff as 'absolutely wonderful'. The atmosphere is entirely inclusive and great efforts are made to make sure that all pupils achieve. No pupil has been permanently excluded from Burgate for the last nine years and there have been no fixed term exclusions in the last twelve months. Exceptional support is provided for looked after children, minority ethnic pupils, and those with English as an additional language. Very good provision is made for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, those who have progressed into the sixth form and for those who have been identified as being gifted and talented. Students' opinions are sought on a wide range of issues and careers education and guidance are good. Advice and guidance procedures are continually being refined and pupils are given very good advice and guidance on subject and course option choices in Years 9 and 11. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and risk assessment efficient.

Leadership and management are good and lead to good outcomes for pupils. Regular monitoring of the quality of all aspects of teaching and learning is good at senior management level but more inconsistent at departmental level and this has an effect on achievement. The headteacher and senior team know the school's strengths and weaknesses thoroughly, so the school's self-evaluation is very accurate. As a result planning is well targeted and concentrates both on raising achievement and on the quality of care provided for pupils. For example, the current application for humanities specialist status focuses on literacy skills, particularly for boys. This thorough analysis and the progress made in recent years indicate that capacity to improve is good. There are good links with parents and their concerns are responded to well. For example, after a recent survey raised concerns about the quality of music provision, plans to improve it are now in place. Governors provide good support and challenge for the headteacher and leadership team. They have recently revised their procedures to ensure they meet their responsibilities more efficiently.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Students of a wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests are welcome into the sixth form and the standards they achieve are above the national average. Many students achieve exceptionally well in academic and vocational courses. The sixth form is popular and growing quickly, with most pupils from the main school choosing to stay on. About half of the students in Year 12 come from other schools.

Students settle in quickly, believe that they are well looked after and enjoy life in the sixth form. They particularly value the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning community, the high quality of care and guidance provided by staff and the good facilities for well-supervised private study. Personal development is good. The tutoring system and the responsibilities taken by students around the school prepare them effectively for higher

education or employment. Guidance on higher education and careers is now more effective than at the time of the last inspection and overall completion rates are good. Attendance is now improving again but was only average last year. Attendance is not monitored rigorously enough.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Students believe that teachers are passionate about their subjects and that lessons are very carefully planned, challenging and interesting. By Year 13 more lessons are providing good opportunities for students to learn independently.

The curriculum is excellent and provides a very wide range of choices. Care is taken in planning to make sure that the individual needs of students are met. Where the school is unable to provide appropriate courses for students at the end of Year 11, they are encouraged to attend other 16-19 provision in the area that meets their needs more effectively. Good opportunities exist for enrichment and community based activity. The school has links with a range of colleges in order to provide a range of 14-19 pathways.

Care and guidance are excellent. Performance is monitored and reviewed effectively and the sixth form area is managed well for the benefit of all students. Leadership and management are good although the monitoring of teaching and learning does not focus sufficiently on specific sixth form teaching skills.

Overall provision is outstanding and capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of assessment and subject based feedback, so that teachers inform students consistently about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve specific subject skills.
- Engage pupils in activities that improve their understanding of Britain's diversity.
- Secure coherent provision for citizenship.

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	16-19
---	----------------	-------

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	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	2
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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?	2	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
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	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

9 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Burgate School and Sixth Form Centre, Fordingbridge, SP6 1EZ

Many of you will remember when I came to inspect your school on 27 September. I would like to thank you for the polite and helpful way in which you assisted me. In return, I would like to tell you about what I found.

Burgate is a good school with an outstanding sixth form. You make good progress and pupils achieve results at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE that are well above the national average. I am sure that this will get even better as you take more responsibility for your own learning.

I was particularly impressed by the calm and cooperative atmosphere in school, and the way in which you, the staff and the headteacher all work together to make it a happy place. Teachers can teach well and you can learn successfully because everyone is well behaved and supportive of one other. The curriculum matches your needs and your ambitions well so that you enjoy school and attend every day. Many of you told me how skilfully the teaching and support staff take care of you, especially those of you who do not find learning so easy.

There are three improvements that I have asked the headteacher and staff to make.

- Make sure that you are given useful and helpful feedback in all lessons so that you know exactly what you need to do in each subject in order to improve.
- Increase your understanding of all the different races and cultures of people in Britain today.
- Make sure that there is enough time for you to learn about citizenship.

You have a very enthusiastic and hard working headteacher and committed staff at Burgate who have very high expectations of you and want you to do as well as you can. I am sure you will support them. If you would like to read the finished report you will find it at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

With very best wishes for the future,

Mary Massey HMI