

Bay House School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116501
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312345
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	2081
6th form	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Donovan
Headteacher	Mr I Potter
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Gomer Lane Gosport PO12 2QP
Telephone number	02392 587931
Fax number	02392 524260

Age group	11-19
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Introduction

Two Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection; they visited the school for one day. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and its sixth form. They investigated the following areas in detail: the levels of achievement of students in Years 7 to 11; the quality of teaching throughout the school and the overall effectiveness of the sixth form. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF); nationally published assessment data; the school's own assessment records; curriculum and planning documents; observation of the school at work; interviews with staff, students and governors and the responses in the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Bay House School is a larger than average, popular, mixed comprehensive school serving the coastal town of Gosport and the surrounding area. It is a mathematics and computing specialist college. Students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is broadly average. Most students are from a white British background and the vast majority speak English as their first language. The number of students with identified educational difficulties or disabilities is below average, as is the number with statements relating to special educational needs. The composition of the sixth form is less socially diverse, although an increasing proportion of students, at about 30 per cent, are supported by Education Maintenance Awards (EMAs). The Year 12 intake draws on a wide range of local schools in addition to Bay House.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bay House School is a good school with several outstanding features. The students have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and generally around school is excellent. The school has an inclusive ethos and the students are encouraged and enabled to do their best whatever their background or ability. The students feel safe and secure. They comment that the school is friendly and harmonious and they praise their staff for being supportive, caring and helpful. Most parents are supportive of the school. Though some commented in the inspection questionnaire that they would like more consultation, many praised the school. One parent reflected the views of many by saying, 'I cannot speak highly enough of the school. Since joining the school, my child has settled quickly and is making excellent progress.'

The students enter the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are average for their age. As they move through the school, they achieve well so that by the end of Year 11 they attain above average standards in examination results. Students in Years 7 to 11 make good progress towards meeting challenging targets and there is no evidence of significant underachievement by any particular group of students. Achievement is good because there is much good, or better, teaching, and because the school offers an excellent and continually improving curriculum. Care, guidance and support are good, but with some very strong features. The level of pastoral care is especially good, but the school recognises that there are inconsistencies in the quality and accuracy of tracking and assessment. Though students are all set aspirational targets, there are inconsistencies in the way that their progress towards these is monitored by teachers.

Students' personal development is good. Most students enjoy school and many have outstanding attitudes to learning. Incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment are rare and when they do occur, they are effectively handled. Attendance is satisfactory. It is marginally below average but improving; the school places a high priority in securing further improvements. The students are developing a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives and good provision is made to advise students about alcohol and drug education. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The student council is an effective vehicle in bringing about change and responsibility is encouraged well. For example, the establishment of a student teaching and learning group is an innovative development that has resulted in the students being able to evaluate critically the education they receive. The recent points raised about improving the way that homework is marked and evaluated indicates the seriousness with which the students have approached this responsible task. The development of the skills necessary for the work place or further study is good. The majority of students develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and computing well as they move through the school. In part, this reflects the school's success as a specialist mathematics and computing college.

The majority of teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. Learning is good because relationships between teachers and students are strong. Staff invariably have high expectations of the students and many lessons are challenging and are taught with enthusiasm and even passion. Planning is good and learning outcomes are usually made clear. There is a tendency in some lessons for the staff to provide too many answers themselves and there are missed opportunities for students to assess their own learning. The school has a very good programme to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and to provide necessary support.

Students are provided with an outstanding and continually improving curriculum that meets individual needs extremely well. There is a very good range of subject choices and recent changes have seen the development of a more vocationally orientated curriculum for some students. The establishment of an 'enterprise academy' is a novel response to help some disaffected students re-engage with education. The innovative nature of the course offers students different ways to utilise their talents while developing their confidence in literacy and numeracy for example. Extra-curricular provision is very strong and the students are offered many opportunities to enjoy dramatic, musical and sporting events. On the day of the inspection, students were able to participate in events as diverse as a flute ensemble or 'ultimate' Frisbee. The students also appreciate the full and varied programme of educational visits.

The school is led and managed very well. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and he is very well supported by a strong senior management team who have a keen understanding of what the school does well and where improvements are needed. This is based on a rigorous analysis of data and other evidence, including lesson observations and surveys of the views of parents and students. Self-evaluation is good and promotes improvement. Middle managers are developing their roles well but there are inconsistencies in the monitoring of students' progress. Governance is outstanding and the governing body is fully aware of what the school does well and recognises the need to raise achievement further. They are truly challenging but critical friends of the school. Finances are managed well and the resources available to the school are deployed very well.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection. Its status as a mathematics and computing college has seen standards in mathematics and computing increase. It has also enabled other departments the opportunity to raise standards by using numeracy skills more effectively. The community impact has been marked with the school forging some strong partnerships with the local and wider community. Many primary schools now work in partnership with the school and there is a good range of suitable courses for adults in the wider community to follow. The school is developing well and there is a good capacity for it to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding. The sixth form is very popular in the local community and applications for places are over subscribed. Students enter the sixth form with standards that are below the national average but leave at the end of Year 13 with standards that are above average. Attainment in mathematics at A level is particularly high and reflects the school's specialist status well. The progress of students is outstanding and the school is recognised as being in the top five per cent of all schools nationally in terms of the rate of progress students make. Students demonstrate very sensible and mature attitudes in lessons and around school. They greatly appreciate the consistently high quality of the teaching they receive from enthusiastic and specialist staff. The number of students leaving during the two years of sixth form is very low demonstrating the outstanding care and guidance provided. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and many of the teachers ensure total engagement of the students. Teachers have very high expectations of their students and review the progress on a regular basis. Any students failing to meet their targets are mentored and effective support is provided. As one student commented: 'I like the fact that I am challenged and supported because I want to do well.'

The excellent progress the students make is significantly helped by the good and appropriate curriculum that is provided and there are excellent opportunities for the students to work with

and learn from other organisations. For example, the students are very well advised on university choices.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. The experienced team of managers know the sixth form and students well and show a total commitment to every student and are clearly focused on success for all. They evaluate their work well and are keen to ensure that standards rise further. There is an excellent capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement further by ensuring all staff understand and consistently apply the agreed processes of setting targets, monitoring progress and providing effective guidance to all students.

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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	16-19
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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	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?	2	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

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	1
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	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	1	
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	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?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	1
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	2	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	1	
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

27 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Bay House School, Gosport, PO12 2QP

Thank you for making us feel so welcome during our recent visit and for your assistance during the inspection. We greatly valued your views. The following is a summary of our findings.

Bay House School is a good school with several outstanding features, including an outstanding sixth form. You make good progress in your studies and you achieve well because you are taught well. In some lessons, the teaching is awesome. You are provided with an outstanding curriculum and receive good care, guidance and support, though some elements of teachers' assessments and academic tracking need to be refined so that standards of work are further improved. Most of you enjoy school and many of you have an excellent commitment to your education. Your personal development is good. Your attendance is satisfactory and your behaviour is excellent. The school is harmonious and you show a good willingness to accept responsibility. You have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives and many of you make a good contribution to your school and the community. This is enhanced by extra-curricular activities and your designation as a specialist mathematics and computing college. The school prepares you well for the next stages in your lives.

We have suggested the following area to make your school even more successful.

- Help you to gain even higher standards in your work by improving assessment and target setting and the way teachers track your achievements.

You can also help the school to do well by maintaining your positive attitudes towards your education.

Thank you again for helping us and best wishes for all your future endeavours.

Bill Stoneham

Lead inspector