

The Stonehenge School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126458
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315557
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Sanderson HMI

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	757
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Allan Peach
Headteacher	Nigel Roper
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Antrobus Road Amesbury Salisbury SP4 7ND
Telephone number	01980 623407
Fax number	01980 625547

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. During a one-day visit, the inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; personal development; quality of teaching and learning; and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, published test and examination results, policies, minutes of meetings and other school documentation, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and students, and parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The Stonehenge School is a smaller than average sized secondary school that has slightly increased in size since the last inspection. Most students are of White British heritage and the proportion of students whose first language is not English is well below the national average. The number of students eligible for free school meals is below that found in most schools. Around one eighth of students are from military families. Some of these students enter and leave the school at other than the usual times. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has specialist provision for up to six students with hearing impairment. The school has very recently been successful in its application to become a specialist mathematics and computing college from September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Stonehenge School provides its students with a good standard of education. It is popular with parents, and students speak positively of their school experience.

Achievement is good and standards are average. When students start at the school in Year 7, standards are below average. Standards at the end of Year 11 have improved considerably over the previous two years. The percentage of students achieving five or more A* - C grades, including English and mathematics in GCSE examinations, was similar to the national average in 2007. All groups of students make good progress in their learning from Year 7 through to Year 11. However, there is variation in the progress made by students in different subjects. For example, the progress of students in English language and mathematics was very good in 2007 yet only satisfactory in history, physical education and English literature. The progress made by students in Years 7 to 9 is better than that seen in Years 10 and 11. The leadership team have accurately identified the reasons for this difference. They have made changes to the curriculum and introduced a more rigorous system of tracking students' progress. Test and examination results for current students in Years 10 and 11 indicate that progress in these year groups is improving.

The curriculum is good and meets students' needs and interests well. A new 'Pathways' model has recently been introduced in Years 10 and 11. This includes traditional GCSE courses, a range of vocational courses and opportunities for alternative work-based education, alongside GCSEs taken in school. This new curriculum structure is doing much to encourage students of all abilities to achieve well. The school has good plans to extend further the range of vocational courses offered in September 2008. A wide range of trips, visits, clubs and activities are provided for students outside of normal school hours. These are well attended and make a valuable contribution to students' good personal development.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are monitored regularly by both senior and middle leaders. Records of lesson observations show that staff are given clear and helpful feedback on how to improve both teaching and students' learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. They make it clear to students what they are to learn and make good use of a range of activities to engage and motivate them. However, in some lessons teachers do not make effective use of data on attainment to ensure that activities are suitably challenging for all students in the class. Most marking provides students with helpful advice about how to improve their work. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are known well to teachers, provided with effective support and make good progress.

The school has a welcoming and friendly ethos. As one parent commented, 'We find the school very friendly and approachable.' Students behave well in lessons and around the school site, showing a sensible concern for one another. Attendance is similar to the national average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students are encouraged to reflect on the needs of others and they raise funds for charitable causes. Students contribute well to their community through the school and anti-bullying councils. Students say they feel safe in school and that incidents of bullying are rare. They are also confident that if they have any concerns or worries these will be taken seriously by staff and the issue dealt with appropriately. Students' understanding of healthy lifestyle choices is good. Many participate in a good amount of physical exercise each week; they also have good opportunities to eat and drink healthily

during the school day. The well planned work-related dimension to the curriculum, alongside tutorial and personal, social and health education programmes, ensures students develop the personal skills necessary for their future adult working lives.

Good procedures ensure the smooth transition of students from partner primary schools into Year 7. The process of induction and support for those students, such as children of service families who join the school in later years, is also good. This is aided by the strong links the school maintains with the armed forces. Clear guidelines and procedures for child protection arrangements are in place and proper attention is paid to health and safety procedures. Checks on staff are robust and meet government requirements. Vulnerable students are well cared for with good links with a range of outside agencies in place to support their well-being. Challenging targets are set for students and good systems are in place for tracking their progress towards these targets. Any students who are identified as underachieving are provided with effective support and guidance. The progress of groups of students is also carefully analysed to ensure that their needs are being met. For example, the careful monitoring of the progress of children from service families indicates that they are making at least similar progress to all other students in the school. Students speak positively about the support and advice they receive. They are given good advice about Year 9 options and the range of opportunities for post-16 study, which enable them to make informed choices for the future.

The headteacher leads the school well. He has recently restructured the leadership team so that it is focused effectively on raising students' achievement. Systems of self-evaluation are robust and the leadership team are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The new line management structure means that senior leaders are now working more rigorously with subject leaders to raise students' achievement. Overall, subject leaders work well to bring about improvements in teaching and students' achievement. However, not all are equally effective in this regard and consequently, there is variation in students' achievement between subjects. The governing body fulfils its statutory role well, and provides the leadership team with effective challenge and support. The financial management of the school is secure. Effective planning has led to the removal of a deficit budget and there is a clear focus on ensuring good value for money. The issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed. The rise in standards and the accuracy of self-evaluation provide the school with good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the level of variation in students' achievement between subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11, by improving all to the level of the best.
- Ensure that all teachers use attainment data well to plan lessons that contain suitably challenging activities for all students in their class.

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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?	2
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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
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	2
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
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

13 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Stonehenge School, Amsbury SP4 7ND

I should like to thank you for the warm welcome you extended to me during the recent inspection of your school. I very much enjoyed my discussions with you. I thought you would like a summary of the inspection findings, but also hope that you will take the opportunity to read the whole report. Your school provides you with a good education. The main strengths of the school are summarised below.

- You are taught well and make good progress in your learning.
- You know your targets for the end of Year 9 and Year 11, and know how well you are doing.
- Staff look after and care for you well.
- You behave well in lessons and around the school.
- You told me that there was little bullying in the school and that any incidents that do occur are dealt with well by staff.
- Staff listen to and respond to your views through the active school council.
- You are able to choose to study a wide range of both academic and vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 through the school's 'Pathways' model.
- Many of you are involved in the wide range of after-school clubs and activities organised by the school.

Although your school is good, it could become even better. I have identified two areas for improvement and have asked the school leadership team to ensure that:

- you make at least good progress in all of your subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- all lessons contain suitable activities that provide you with a good level of challenge.

I wish you well and look forward to hearing good things about you all in the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson Her Majesty's Inspector