

Chafford Hundred Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132083
Local Authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	319560
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Raymond Jardine

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	750
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dave Wellard
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2007
School address	Mayflower Road Chafford Hundred Grays Essex RM16 6SA
Telephone number	01375 484580
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average secondary school with more boys than girls in most year groups. Most students are of White British backgrounds but about a third come from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion for whom English is not their first language is about average and ten are at an early stage of spoken English. Students come from very mixed social and economic backgrounds; a few are looked after by the local authority. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. An average proportion of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is considerably above average. The school has a speech and language specialist facility that currently supports five students. Students' attainment on entry varies around the average and is a little above in some lower years.

The school achieved Healthy Schools and Sportsmark awards in 2007 and in the same year gained International School status. It has Business and Enterprise specialist college designation since 2004. At its last inspection, the school was given a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. It is much improved and now provides a good education for its students so that they achieve well. Much of the improvement is the result of the introduction of rigorous systems for monitoring and improving teaching quality and students' academic progress. The good use now made of such information by middle and senior leaders has added a critical dimension to the drive to raise standards since the last inspection. The headteacher's strong determination to make rapid and sustainable improvements has raised expectations and teamwork throughout the staff. Rigorous lines of accountability that now permeate the school help to ensure that actions to address weaknesses are prompt and effective. The considerable rise in students' standards, particularly in Year 11, bears testimony to the impact of these changes. The great majority of parents are also pleased with the school's work. One said, 'During the past year, things have dramatically improved on the campus.'

Standards in Year 11 have risen substantially in the last two years and achievement is now good. Three quarters of students are currently on course to achieve five or more GCSEs at grade C or better, 10% more than last year. When English and mathematics are included in the five higher GCSEs the rise is remarkable, rising from only 16% in 2006 to over half of Year 11 students in 2007 and expected to exceed 60% this year. This partly reflects a transformation in English standards since the appointment of a new Head of English two years ago, as well as wider improvements to management across the school. At Key Stage 3, standards and progress have also improved, although not as strongly. While students are now achieving well in English and in mathematics, science is slower to improve because changes to its management have yet to make their full impact. The school has been tackling a legacy of past underachievement when science teaching was not sufficiently rigorous within the integrated curriculum in these year groups, a concern expressed by some parents. Changes to achieve a better balance between thematic teaching across related subjects, and teaching more subjects discretely, including science, are well underway. These changes, designed to raise standards further, are work-in-progress, with further curricular changes planned for later this year. In many other respects, the curriculum has some very good features, especially the influence of the school's specialist business and enterprise status, which is now developing further through a greater international dimension to students' learning. Excellent partnerships with other institutions effectively extend opportunities for students at the school.

Students respond very well to the many opportunities they have to contribute to the school and wider community and their overall personal development is good. They are well cared for in their academic and personal needs, particularly vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties such as autistic tendencies. Students much enjoy school life. Behaviour and attitudes are good. Students show respect and concern for others and learn to work independently and collaboratively so that they acquire good skills to prepare them for their future economic well-being. Teaching quality has improved, with most now good or better. Lessons provide varied and interesting learning opportunities for students to progress well. In weaker lessons, not enough attention is given to ensuring that tasks match the full range of abilities and there are too few checks on learning to ensure that they all make good progress. There is now a lot of good practice on which the school can build to improve teaching quality still further. Governors are now more involved in monitoring the school's work and financial planning has

improved. The increased rigour of the school's monitoring and review and widespread commitment among staff to achieving high standards, provide good potential for maintaining the momentum of improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fully implement and embed planned changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum, particularly affecting science, to raise standards further.
- Achieve greater consistency in ensuring that students of all abilities are challenged and their progress assessed in lessons by building on the best practice in teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in Year 11 have risen very considerably over the last two years. In 2007, standards rose to be about average, with 64% of students attaining five or more higher GCSEs. The results represented satisfactory achievement for those students, taking account of their attainment on entry to Year 7. Results already achieved among the current Year 11, together with modular test and teacher assessments, demonstrate that achievement in Key Stage 4 is now good and standards in Year 11 are considerably above average. Strengths in business studies, information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematics reflect well on the school's specialist status and it met its 2007 targets in these subjects. Science standards, a weakness at the last inspection, are now satisfactory. English is very much improved. A strength is that all students gain qualifications at GCSE and almost all gain at least five.

Standards in Key Stage 3 have also risen, although not as dramatically as in later years and least so in science. Standards are currently above average in English and to a lesser extent mathematics and average in science. Students from minority ethnic groups tend to do better than those with similar backgrounds nationally. Students who find learning more difficult, such as those with speech and language difficulties, progress well. Other vulnerable students and those whose English is at an early stage are monitored and provided for effectively so that they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are proud of the college and enjoy being there. This is reflected in their high level of attendance and involvement in a wide range of activities. Relationships are very good and help to create a supportive and stimulating ethos where students want to do well. They have a good understanding of ways of living and beliefs different from their own, in Britain and globally. This results in students being sensitive to the needs of others and contributes well to this harmonious and ethnically diverse community.

Students are aware of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and this is influencing the choices they make. Many participate in a range of additional clubs and activities to promote exercise and fitness. They appreciate the 'Five a Day Cafe' and the healthy options offered. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of personal safety and behave sensibly and safely around the campus. They are confident in seeking adult support when needed and make the most of opportunities for help from peer mentors. Students' contribution to the college community and further afield is excellent. Through the Campus Council, students are

involved in improvements to the school and meet with other students in the area to further their ideas and put forward their views. Students take part in a wide range of activities involving local businesses and help to improve the environment by working in a local nature reserve. They organise many activities to raise funds for local and national charities. Students leave the school as mature and confident young people.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are typically planned well around clear learning outcomes that are shared with students. Well-structured and varied activities make effective use of their extended length. Teachers' good use of ICT helps to enhance learning and they often use innovative approaches that encourage students to work independently and be actively involved in their learning. Consequently, lessons are interesting, orderly and mostly enjoyable with students learning well. The very best lessons have a real buzz from teaching that is very challenging in getting students to think and participate. This excellent learning is evident in the way students are able to use subject specific vocabulary with accuracy and confidence to analyse and apply their knowledge. Most teachers adapt their teaching and resources well to the different needs of the students in classes that often have a broad range of abilities. Some teaching is less effective in varying activities and resources to challenge all students and to check that they are all making progress in class. The committed and enthusiastic staff are conscientious in their marking but the school recognises that more could be done to show students how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is stimulating, innovative and meets the needs of the great majority of students well, particularly in Key Stage 4. Good provision for business education, mathematics and ICT is evident throughout the school and it has excellent links with other schools, colleges and the business sector that help to broaden students' opportunities. The school has recently gained accreditation as an international school, reflecting the rapidly developing international dimension to its work, including business studies links with other countries such as Germany and France. A distinctive and successful feature is the wide and flexible GCSE programme that allows many students to start some courses in Year 9 and make further choices in Years 10 and 11, spanning GCSE, vocational and advanced subsidiary courses. Consequently, students gain more qualifications than is typical nationally. Revisions are rightly being made to the school's innovative thematic studies programme in Key Stage 3 to help raise standards further. These aim to achieve gains from specialist teaching in more subjects, particularly to improve provision and standards in science, while retaining the benefits of a thematic approach covering fewer, related subjects.

A wide range of well-attended sports and arts activities enrich the curriculum. Close links with employers and further education institutions provide very good, extended work related learning opportunities. The school is leading in the local development of new diplomas in business and administration and working with a sixth form college on the introduction of the International Baccalaureate.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of students' care, guidance and support is good. A revision of the 'one-to-one' mentoring scheme, with a greater emphasis on academic monitoring, is bearing fruit. As one parent noted, 'The mentoring scheme has been very effective in raising our son's attainment.' Team and subject leaders now play a central role within much improved systems for monitoring students' progress towards challenging targets. The actions now taken to prevent underachievement are contributing much to the substantial rise in standards. More focused monitoring of attendance and punctuality has also been successful in improving attendance. High expectations of how students should conduct themselves, together with improvements to their pastoral care, have resulted in a low level of exclusions and fewer incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Students agree that the standard of behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved because the revised behaviour policy is implemented more consistently. They feel safe from bullying.

Arrangements for ensuring students' health, welfare and safety, child protection, and supporting looked-after children are robust. Support for students with additional learning needs is strong and these students make good progress. Those with medical needs also do well because effective support ensures that they miss very little learning. Transfer from primary school is good, particularly for vulnerable students. A wide range of programmes, including the involvement of external agencies, ensures students are guided well when making choices at 14 and 16.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leadership team, new at the time of the last inspection, work well together under the strong and determined leadership of the headteacher. Expectations of what can be achieved have been raised and clear direction for improvement pervades the staff. There have been some good new teaching appointments as well as critical new leadership responsibilities, such as English.

Lines of accountability throughout the school's management are now good. A key improvement has been the establishment of more structured monitoring and review within subjects and year teams. Close attention is now given to monitoring and improving teaching quality and standards. Consequently, middle leaders are much more influential in improving provision. Even so, there is still work to do to ensure that management at this level is of consistently good quality across the school. Self-evaluation is now accurate; the school has a very clear understanding of where its strengths and weaknesses are. Teaching quality in particular has improved because of higher expectations and concerted actions stemming from senior leaders and effective coaching from advanced skills teachers and consultants.

Governors are more involved and confident in checking and guiding the school's work through training given, for example, to interpret key information. Their role in challenging progress in its priorities is not as strong.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	1
The behaviour of learners	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	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	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

9 May 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Chafford Hundred Business and Enterprise College, Grays, Essex, RM16 6SA

Thank you for the warm welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. I am writing to tell you about the main findings of the inspection.

We think that your school has improved in many aspects of its work and now provides you with a good education. Results among Year 11 students improved considerably last year so that over half of Year 11 students achieved five higher GCSEs, including English and mathematics, partly because provision for English is so much better. Currently, Year 11 students are set to do even better through your hard work and the support and guidance staff give you. The curriculum provides you with a diverse range of choices in partnership with other institutions that is serving your needs and aspirations well, especially in Years 10 and 11. We can also see improvements in Years 7 to 9, particularly in English and mathematics, although some aspects could be even better. While the integrated curriculum in these years brings a number of benefits, the school is working to provide more specialist teaching in those subjects where you would most benefit, particularly science. We have asked the school to continue with these developments and particularly to raise standards further in science in Years 7 to 9.

You make a very positive contribution to the school and show care for others less fortunate than yourselves and the environment. The calm and harmonious school community helps you to learn and to mature as young people. You are acquiring good independent learning skills that we think prepare you well for your future lives. You are also making good choices for your own health, safety and fitness, aided by the options in your very good 'Five a Day Cafe'.

Mr Tomlinson and the senior management team have been working very hard to extend close and regular checks on the school's performance, particularly teaching quality and your own progress towards your targets. We know that you appreciate the additional help and support you receive when you need it. Teaching quality has improved but we have asked the school to ensure that you are all challenged and your work checked even more consistently. You can help by regularly reviewing your work in relation to your targets with your teachers so that you know what to do next.

With all good wishes for your future at Chafford Hundred campus

Ray Jardine

Lead inspector