

# Chipping Sodbury School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109324
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	324950
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Green HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	925
Sixth form	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Stimpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Philip Lidstone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2005
<b>School address</b>	Bowling Road Chipping Sodbury Bristol BS37 6EW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 862900
<b>Fax number</b>	01454 862901

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is average in size; its sixth form has been small but has been expanded this academic year and operates in collaboration with two other schools in what is called The Link. The school has specialist technology school status. Most students are of White British heritage from predominantly favourable socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is a third of the national average. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below half the national average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, and broadly average to below average on entry to the sixth form.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall. In the sixth form, it is satisfactory and improving. Staff and students clearly share the school's core values of respect, aspiration, responsibility and integrity. These are evident in the consideration and care they show for each other, the effective steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the improved performance of the school. The school's success and good capacity to improve further owe a lot to the effective leadership and management of the headteacher and the senior leadership team whose clear vision and direction set high expectations for staff and students.

At the end of Years 9 and 11 standards are above average. In relation to students' starting points when they enter the school, their progress and achievement are good by the end of these years, including those of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. No group of students underperforms. Achievement in the small sixth form last year was satisfactory though recent improvements in provision, in students' attitudes to work and the strengthening of leadership and management in the sixth form indicate higher standards this year.

Students' personal development and well-being, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Students have positive relationships with their peers and adults both in and outside of the school, show an understanding of the diversity of British communities and contribute much to both the school and local community. Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Teaching and learning are good overall and satisfactory in the sixth form. Most lessons are planned carefully and taught effectively using a range of stimulating methods. However, the quality of marking and feedback to students on how to improve their work is not consistently high enough, and sixth form students' ability to work independently and collaboratively is underdeveloped.

The curriculum and the care, guidance and support students receive are good. Their needs and capabilities are met very well by the curriculum and other activities. They enjoy participating in a wide variety of sports and clubs. The school works highly effectively with other agencies to promote learners' well-being and vulnerable students are supported well. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are effective. Academic monitoring and guidance is effective and demanding individual targets are set and reviewed regularly with students. The effective promotion of community cohesion, diversity and equality underpins the inclusive nature of the school. Its specialist technology status has a significant beneficial impact on students' achievement, their personal development and the curriculum. Challenging whole school and technology specific targets are set and generally met. The school's recent success shows it could set even more challenging and ambitious targets to secure greater improvement.

The school's high quality self-evaluation effectively identifies its performance and priorities for development. The great majority of parents are supportive of the school and complimentary about the quality of teaching and care provided and its leadership and management. As one parent wrote to inspectors, 'I am extremely impressed by the commitment of the school to developing each child to their potential.'

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

Students make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily although there is considerable variation in performance between different subject areas; in design and technology, achievement

is outstanding. Students' personal development and well-being is satisfactory overall but improving; students contribute well to the work of the school and beyond, for example, as reading partners for younger students and undertaking charitable work overseas. However, there are only limited opportunities for students to influence decision making or express views through, for example, a sixth form student council. The good quality teaching in the school overall is not yet evident in all sixth form lessons but is increasing, although it has yet to develop students sufficiently as independent and collaborative learners. The regular meetings of faculty teams from each of the schools in the collaborative sixth form are beginning to address this through increased sharing of good practice.

The curriculum is broad, imaginative and responsive to students' needs and the range of vocational courses has increased this year. A wide variety of enrichment activities is now available including a regular programme of outside speakers; these are well supported and much enjoyed by students. Students value the good academic and personal guidance that they have started to receive this year. The recently appointed head of learning has established effective systems to do this and to improve the quality of teaching. She is providing a clear and energetic lead for the improvement of provision across the sixth form, aided by the very effective co-ordination of the partnership by The Link director. It is too soon to see the impact of these improvements in examination results but the capacity in leadership and management to raise standards is strong.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that improvements in teaching and learning in the school overall are embedded in the sixth form, particularly the development of students' ability to work independently and collaboratively.
- Ensure that all teachers' marking and guidance to students on what they need to do to improve is of a consistently high quality.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The standards attained by Year 9 students in the national tests in 2008 were above average and well above average in English. These results were a significant improvement from the previous two years and more students attained the higher levels. Given their starting points when they joined the school, students' progress and achievement were good. Standards in GCSE examinations have been rising since the last inspection and results were above average this year. Students' attainment in design and technology was exceptionally high. In relation to Year 11 students' attainment when they entered the school, their progress and achievement were good and outstanding in design and technology. Boys made significant improvements in their performance from previous years. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made similar progress to that of other students and no group of students underperformed.

Year 9 and Year 11 students' current standards and levels of progress match those of last year's cohorts at this time, indicating they should achieve equally well by the end of this academic year. Improvements in standards and achievement over the last two years are due to the improved teaching and academic guidance students now receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as exhibited in their thoughtful responses in assemblies and discussions, and their considerate attitudes towards each other. They embrace the school's core values very well and reflect them in their positive conduct that helps create a cohesive school community. Students have good relationships with the local and wider community, developed through the curriculum and their involvement in a range of activities outside the school. As a result, students show a clear understanding of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom and beyond.

Students say they enjoy school and their high levels of attendance support this. They show much enjoyment and good engagement in lessons, responding positively to new challenges and ideas. As one parent wrote about her daughter, 'She is happy and keen to learn and is embracing lessons and homework.' Disruptions to learning are rare and students behave very well in class and around the school. They understand and share the school's anti-bullying stance and concern for equality. They feel safe, adopt safe practices in practical lessons and know where to get help if they have any worries or concerns. Students are well aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles as shown in their meal choices at lunchtime and in their high level of involvement in physical activity. Through the school council and senate, students participate effectively in decision making and representing the views of their peers. They develop secure workplace skills for their future economic well-being through work experience and enterprise activities. Their good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) contributes to this very well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of their subjects and of the way young people learn. This enables them to plan and present lessons that stimulate learning and motivate students to complete tasks to a high standard. The positive relationships teachers have with students encourage good attitudes to learning. As one parent wrote, '...lessons are interesting and teachers bring out enthusiasm in the children'. A range of effective strategies and resources is employed and lessons are tailored well to students' needs based on their prior learning. They are guided to improve further by the helpful comments most teachers provide when assessing their work. The wide range of assessment techniques used, including peer marking and self-assessment, assists learning well and makes it interesting. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's virtual learning environment aids students' learning very well, for example, in completing homework through online support from their teachers after school. However, this effective teaching and assessment is not yet consistent across all staff or embedded in sixth form teaching. In some lessons, active learning is not encouraged, planning for students' different needs is less thorough, marking is not as frequent and the guidance on what students need to do to improve is too limited.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The broad curriculum meets the needs of all students. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from an appropriately restricted curriculum taught by a smaller number of teachers with additional support staff. Students enjoy the experiences provided by recent curriculum developments including 'Learning to Learn', the 'Life' curriculum and a wide range of practical subjects. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 is flexible to provide a variety of programmes to motivate students and enable them to achieve well. Opportunities to study different science programmes, vocational courses and work-related programmes in collaboration with the local college are good features of the options students have. The curriculum also provides suitable opportunities for the most able to be challenged.

A high proportion of students successfully complete courses in the school's specialist status subjects. Every student follows a design and technology option to the end of Year 11, as well as an ICT course, and most achieve well. Assemblies, humanities subjects, design and technology and 'Life' provide effective social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning. The wide range of foreign residential visits and links with a school in India also contribute to this. Students' personal development is fostered further through practical activities involving the local police and events such as 'Healthy Living Week', in which every lesson consideration is given on how to stay healthy and safe. The range and variety of extra-curricular activities and the high levels of students' participation in them make an excellent contribution to their enjoyment and achievement.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff show high levels of care and concern for all students and each is valued and respected. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support, both in the classroom and through intervention programmes. Vulnerable students' progress is managed very well to ensure it is as good as other student groups'. Any students recognised as being at risk are quickly identified and intervention is put in place and outcomes monitored. Staff have established excellent links with external agencies to assist this. While there is inconsistency in the quality of short-term marking and feedback, academic mentoring and the long-term guidance students receive are generally good. Individual learning plans are used effectively to steer students' progress. Most students are aware of their current and target grades but their understanding of what they need to do to improve is more variable. The school provides good advice and guidance in relation to curriculum choices and progression to further education or employment. Students' social and economic well-being and their understanding of equality are promoted very well through assemblies, learning support and the 'Life' curriculum. Procedures to safeguard students are effective and meet requirements and the school pays good attention to students' health and safety. Students' good behaviour is encouraged by highly effective rewards and sanctions that are used consistently. Robust systems promote good attendance, including effective support programmes for persistent absentees. The effectiveness of this care is reflected by one parent, who wrote, 'It ensures that children grow in self-esteem and from this their ability to learn develops.'

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher's clear vision, strong direction and effective communication underpin the improvements the school has made since the last inspection. In conjunction with the highly effective senior leadership team and a strong group of middle managers, he has accurately analysed the school's performance and implemented strategies that are successful in promoting good quality care and education. This has set teachers and students high expectations and created a common sense of purpose that has been successful in raising students' achievement and standards.

Systematic observation of all teachers' lessons is used to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning. A range of beneficial professional development activities, including effective opportunities for sharing good practice, has helped staff to do this. The leadership and management skills of middle managers are developed well through good internal and external training and guidance from senior leaders. The school sets challenging yet realistic targets, including those for its specialist subjects, that have contributed effectively to raising standards. However, recent success, particularly in the GCSE examinations, indicates that these could be even more ambitious. Performance data are used very well to track the progress of students, to identify those who are underachieving and to prompt intervention to improve their performance. Accurate self-evaluation takes very good account of a wide range of views and evaluative data.

The school's leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination well. They have created an ethos of inclusion that has enabled all students to flourish. The school's recognition of what is required to promote community cohesion is good, based on a sound analysis of the school community and students' needs. Understanding and valuing British and global communities, and the promotion of the school's values, are developed well through the broad curriculum, stimulating teaching and participation in events with the local community. One parent wrote that the school 'puts a lot of effort into developing character and a sense of responsibility'. The school's audit of how its provision contributes to community cohesion is used effectively to inform its plans for improvement. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively and hold the school's leaders and managers suitably to account for the school's performance while providing valuable support. The school's resources are deployed well. Facilities have improved significantly since the last inspection.





## 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	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

## Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	3
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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Chipping Sodbury School, Chipping Sodbury, BS37 6EW

Thank you for the help you provided the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting members of year groups and we learned a great deal from our discussions with many of you in lessons and around the school.

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall; in the sixth form, it is satisfactory and improving. You clearly share the school's core values of respect, aspiration, responsibility and integrity and you demonstrate them in your positive attitudes and good behaviour. The standards attained in national tests and examinations last year in Years 9 and 11 were above average and students made good progress from the time they entered the school, including those who had learning difficulties. Progress and achievement in the sixth form were satisfactory. The progress of current Years 9 and 11 students is good and you are on track to attain similar standards and achieve as well as students did last year. Sixth form students have not yet developed the ability to work sufficiently independently and collaboratively to enable them to perform better. The school is introducing well devised initiatives to help them to do this. Your teachers plan well and use effective strategies to help you learn, although the quality of marking and the feedback you receive is not consistently good.

In Years 7 to 11 your personal development and well-being are good; in the sixth form they are satisfactory. You enjoy school and feel safe in the calm, orderly atmosphere that exists. We clearly saw the pride you show in your roles as members of the school council and senate and of clubs and sports teams. The quality of the care, guidance and support you receive is good. The curriculum you receive meets your needs and capabilities well. The quality of the learning that arises from the school's technology specialist status and variety of extra-curricular activities has a significant, beneficial impact on your enjoyment and achievement.

The clear vision, strong direction and effective leadership and management of the headteacher and senior teachers underpin the school's success. In order to improve further, we have asked the school to ensure that teaching and learning in the sixth form are improved, particularly students' ability to work independently and collaboratively. We have also asked that all teachers' marking and guidance to students on what they need to do to improve be of a consistently high quality. You can really help by striving to do your very best in tests and examinations.

Best wishes with your studies.

Nick Green Her Majesty's Inspector