

Castle View School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 115335 |
| Local Authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 326182 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 January 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | David Jones 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 (total) | 955 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Terry Lovell |
| Headteacher | Mr Russell Sullivan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 January 2006 |
| School address | Meppel Avenue Canvey Island Essex SS8 9RZ |
| Telephone number | 01268696811 |
| Fax number | 01268511585 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Age group | 11–16 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 January 2009 |
| Inspection number | 326182 |

© Crown copyright 2009

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 (HMI) and three Additional Inspectors. The inspection was carried out in parallel with the inspection of a neighbouring school on to whose premises Castle View are scheduled to move because of the local reorganisation of secondary education.

Description of the school

Castle View is a mixed comprehensive school of average size serving the central and northern areas of Canvey Island. The school roll is increasing significantly due to of the ongoing reorganisation of schools locally. The local authority (LA) has confirmed its plans to transfer Year 8 pupils from a neighbouring school to Castle View and other local schools for their Key Stage 4 courses.

Students' backgrounds vary, although across Canvey Island there is less economic advantage and fewer adults with experience of higher education than is the case nationally. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average and the number whose first language is not English is low. The proportion of students registered by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion of students with a statement of educational needs is above the national figure. The majority of these have moderate learning difficulties, or behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Castle View has received the Department for Children, School and Families (DCSF) International School Award, Artsmark, Sports Mark, Investors in People, School Achievement Award and the Recognition of Quality Award for Work Experience Provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The quality of education is satisfactory with a number of good features. Standards and achievement are satisfactory overall with an improving trend at GCSE. Although girls are generally more successful than boys, there is no discernable difference between the progress made by those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their peers. The few students from ethnic minority backgrounds make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with one in three lessons judged to be good or better.

Leadership and management are satisfactory having secured improvement in public examinations and made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Governors are very supportive and have a clear strategic view; governance is satisfactory. Recent HMI led subject survey inspections were positive about provision in mathematics and citizenship. The current extensive trial of the extended school day has provided students with significantly enhanced opportunities to engage in educational activities; these positive developments support the judgement that capacity to improve is good.

Overall, self-evaluation is satisfactory and senior staff have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders were invited to observe teaching with HMI the views they expressed generally concurred with the judgements given by inspectors. A senior manager was invited to review departmental marking procedures with HMI: the inconsistencies of style and rate of completion evident require further development. The rising number on roll is creating pressure on facilities.

The students' personal development, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in particular their behaviour and general attitudes to education are good. Care, support and guidance are good with pastoral support more positive than academic guidance. Attendance is in line with secondary schools nationally. Efforts to secure the students' future economic well-being are good. The students make an outstanding contribution to the local community.

The students are guided towards healthy lifestyles by effective physical education provision. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement; focus on student engagement in learning by planning lessons that meet the student's varied individual learning needs and by standardising how marking is used to inform students of their progress.
- Monitor teaching and learning more consistently to provide staff with an accurate evaluation of how to enhance provision.
- Explore ways in which the school can work with neighbouring institutions to enhance provision and alleviate the increasing pressure on facilities.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry has been close to the national average for some years. The unvalidated results of the 2008 GCSE examinations show that the proportion of students obtaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics, the key national benchmark, remained below the national average at 38%. However, this represents steady improvement over the last three years. The proportion of students obtaining five higher grade GCSE remained consistent at 44% for the second year. The proportion of students obtaining five A* to G grades was above the national average for the third year in succession. The current modular GCSE results in English are more positive than at the same point in the previous year. Students were more successful in mathematics than in English and the performance of girls was stronger than of the boys. Examination outcomes in English, mathematics, applied science, French, drama and child development were positive while those in graphic products, law and business studies were a concern. The performance of the small number of students from ethnic minority communities was close to the national average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The students' personal development and well-being is good. Relationships between students and with staff are very good and contribute significantly to the creation of an environment where bullying and racist incidents are rare. The students report that should any such incidents occur prompt and effective action is taken. Students enjoy their lessons, demonstrate respect for each other and have positive attitudes to learning. They appreciate the opportunities for development provided by the school both academically and socially through the 'U choose' programme. They feel that their views are listened to and value their school council. Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. Students feel safe, and are clear about how to stay safe in the wider community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school works hard to ensure students have an understanding of life in a multicultural world. Students develop good personal skills making an outstanding contribution to both the school and wider community through charitable work. For example, Year 9 has paid for two new houses in Sri Lanka following the tsunami. In 2008, the school achieved the International School Award at intermediate level.

Students take advantage of opportunities available for developing healthy dietary and exercise habits, many taking part in the extra-curricular sporting opportunities available to them. The school is currently seeking the National Healthy Schools award. However, the short time provided for meal breaks during the school day and the lack of seating reduces the opportunities available to students to pursue a healthy diet. Some students consider the food sold in the school expensive.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspectors visited over 40 lessons. Around 90% were satisfactory or better, with one in three, good or better. As a result of systematic and 'safe' teaching, students make satisfactory progress. A wide range of staff undertake lesson observations and this helps to share good practice.

However, because senior leaders do not moderate lesson observations sufficiently frequently, the school overestimates the quality of teaching and learning.

The best lessons are well structured and, because teachers communicate clearly, most students understand what they have to do. Students are normally well motivated, well behaved and keen to learn. Teachers treat students with respect, manage them effectively and are supportive of the individual. Good use of information communication technology (ICT) greatly enhances the quality of learning, adding variety, interest and enjoyment. In an outstanding English lesson, very good planning, role-play and questioning matched tasks very effectively to the students' learning needs.

In too many lessons, the pace of learning is slowed by excessive teacher interjection and insufficient student involvement. Some of the tasks set, although relevant, lack imagination, challenge and excitement; others were not sufficiently focused on the needs of individual learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum provision is good because of the wide range of enrichment activities that many students engage in. As a result of the recent change in the school day, students have the opportunity to study additional courses from the 'U Choose' programme such as geology, Mandarin and hairdressing. Students told us they greatly appreciate this feature of the school with one saying that, 'I am here almost every day doing activities after school'. There are good opportunities for all students to develop their particular talents and interests, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented.

In Year 7, students have the opportunity to develop their learning skills through the 'springboard' course. The school is developing its 14–19 curriculum in conjunction with other educational providers. The curriculum is enriched through good use of visitors, work experience and educational visits which have a positive impact on the students' academic and social skills.

Specialist school status has enhanced the curriculum and all subjects now benefit from a range of ICT facilities. Academic gains are evident in science and mathematics, however, the school recognises the scope for further development. The schools specialist outreach work has helped improve science standards at the local primary schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall, although pastoral care is stronger than academic guidance because of the inconsistencies between departments.

Students readily acknowledge that pastoral support is available for those who have worries or concerns, or who feel they just need to talk to someone. A number of parents and children commented favourably on the positive support and guidance offered to students. Appropriate systems are in place for child protection and procedures for safeguarding students' health and safety are thorough.

The small number of exclusions has been further reduced by the introduction of measures that support anybody at risk of exclusion. Students are well informed about their future options for education and careers and the proportion of the 2008 Year 11 group not in education, employment or training is better than the national average. As a result of consistent efforts by

the school attendance is in line with the national average. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection.

Assessment for learning is managed well in some departments, such as English, but this is not consistent in all subjects. Some teachers are conscientious about regular marking and target setting but this varies and consequently, not all students know how to improve. Regular recording of attainment grades in each subject has strengthened the system for assessment. The data clearly indicates the progress made and alerts teachers to the need to put in place strategies to address any underachievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Senior staff have been able to secure steady improvement in the proportion of students achieving the government's key GCSE targets.

The current senior management team has improved the focus on the quality of teaching but not given sufficient priority to the need to enhance the quality of learning. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not sufficiently consistent.

The school provided a senior management team nominee to join the inspection team and a deputy headteacher played a full part in the inspection process. Senior and middle managers were involved in the joint observations of lessons with inspectors. A formal evaluation of this exercise revealed that, although all participants generally concurred with the inspectors' judgements and identified the major strengths and areas for development in each lesson, the grading offered on some occasions was more positive than the judgement given by HMI.

The school is a calm and orderly community, the management of pupil behaviour is effective and relationships are good; robust procedures have improved attendance and punctuality.

Curriculum development has been a positive feature. The school is trialling an early start to the teaching day to allow significant time in the early afternoon for subject workshops, meetings and extra-curricular clubs; students have responded positively to the opportunities provided. Community cohesion is good and the school works hard to support the close and supportive island community. Geography and citizenship both contribute effectively to broadening the students' horizons. International school status was secured through the schools work with China.

Governors are beginning to explore ways in which they can work with other local schools to enhance provision.

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 |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

| | |
|---|---|
| How good are 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 |
| The extent to which 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 | 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 learners' needs? | 3 |
| 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 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| 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 |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Castle View School, Canvey Island, SS8 9RZ

As some of you may remember, inspectors visited your school early in January 2009. We found that the school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and that you make satisfactory progress. We were impressed by the way you have reacted to the new school day, the early start and the wide range of courses and clubs available through the 'U choose' programme. We noticed the strong sense of community you demonstrate and the outstanding charitable work you manage both locally and internationally. Well done!

We were all impressed by the good social skills that many of you demonstrate and the way in which you conducted yourselves when inspectors had the opportunity to speak with you whether in corridors, classrooms or in discussions. The pastoral care provided by the school is good but we believe the academic guidance available through the marking of your work could be improved. I have asked the headteacher to ensure that lessons provide you with a greater proportion of good learning opportunities and to send senior staff to monitor teaching more consistently.

I look forward to hearing about your future successes.

Yours sincerely

David Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector