

Calthorpe Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116436
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326395
Inspection dates	2–3 June 2009
Reporting inspector	John Kennedy HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	993
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeff Kelsey
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Anwar
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 June 2006
School address	Hitches Lane Fleet GU51 5JA
Telephone number	01252 613483
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 31 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and three groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation and its development plan, its analyses of students' attainment and progress, some departmental reviews and policy documents, safeguarding documentation and students' books. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 165 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- variation in the achievement of students
- the impact of provision in promoting positive behaviour in lessons
- the quality of teaching in promoting good learning, particularly for students of middle and lower ability
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures
- the impact of the school's assessment, tracking and intervention systems for groups who are underperforming.

Information about the school

Calthorpe Park is an average-sized school located on the southern edge of Fleet. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is very low. Most students are from White British backgrounds, reflecting the composition of the local community. About one seventh of the students come from minority ethnic heritages, which is lower than the national average. Most of these students are from Indian, Chinese or various mixed and minority White heritages. The proportion whose first language is not English is low. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average, although the number with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The highest proportion of these students has specific or moderate learning difficulties and some have social, emotional and behavioural needs. The school holds the International School Foundation Award and it achieved National Healthy School status in November 2008. Calthorpe Park was designated a specialist school for mathematics and computing in 2005. In March 2008 the school was inspected as part of Ofsted's survey inspection programme in relation to mathematics, and was judged to be satisfactory and improving in this aspect of its work.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

- Calthorpe Park is a successful and improving school. Improvements made since the last inspection are notable, particular in the behaviour and attendance of students, the quality of their learning and the progress they make. This has not happened by accident. It is the result of careful planning, strong leadership and management, committed and caring staff and a drive and determination to improve. The school has thorough systems for monitoring its performance and, consequently, any areas of weakness are targeted to good effect. Many of its outcomes are outstanding and this is reflected in excellent academic outcomes for students, who also thrive in terms of their personal development. This is perhaps best captured by one parent who wrote, 'My child has never been so enthusiastic about school as she is now. Calthorpe Park is doing a great job.'
- The students are a credit to the school and they play no small part in its success by their own attitudes to learning and the positive contribution they make to the school and the wider community. The students make good progress because they benefit from a well-organised curriculum in addition to good and often outstanding teaching which stretches them, cultivates their interest and provides them with skills for learning.
- The school is ambitious, is determined to continue this trend of improvement and has the capacity to succeed. Leaders and managers have a secure understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and are determined to eliminate the few inconsistencies in teaching and the use of assessment for learning which prevent some teachers from falling short of the predominantly good practice which is evident across the school. With equal determination, the school is tackling the fact that it has not succeeded in ensuring that attendance is above average for all age groups, as well as for the vast majority. In this regard it is dependent on the continued support of all parents and students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment so that all teachers:
 - use assessment data in planning lessons to meet the variety of students' needs and stretch their learning

- consistently apply the school's systems and processes so that they use high-quality feedback and guidance evident in the best lessons to help students know what they need to do to improve.
- Remove variability in attendance by ensuring that:
 - attendance in all years groups remains above average
 - the attendance of girls in Year 11 matches that of boys.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

- In the majority of lessons observed, students of all abilities made good progress. The predominant picture is one of well-motivated, positive and confident learners who enjoy their time in lessons and behave well. The quality of the relationships between staff and students and between students themselves is a major contributing factor to this. Another is that the students are developing good learning skills and being given the opportunity to be creative and critical in their thinking. Students work well together and they exemplify their thirst for learning by the quality and range of questions they ask. Because of the emphasis on supporting every individual, particularly those with any additional needs, students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good and often exceptional progress in their learning. Where progress was not as quite as good, it was generally because the quality of teaching was less engaging for a few students, or teachers did not use assessment information sharply enough to accelerate learning.
- The overriding trend is one of good learning and progress and, consequently, students from mainly above-average starting points succeed in reaching consistently high standards in examination and test results at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. The overall results that students achieve in GCSE examinations have been consistently high for the past three years, and particularly so in 2008. Current data indicate that students are on track to sustain this excellent performance. In over half of the subjects taken, the proportion of students achieving a higher grade was well above average, including the in specialist subjects of mathematics and computer studies. Attainment is consistently high for boys and girls across their best eight subjects. The school has taken action to address any areas of comparative weakness, such as physical education. Current information about progress indicates that this is being successful. The school holds comprehensive and accurate data about current rates of progress and this shows that some variations still exist in rates of progress between ability groups in different year groups, and that the progress that girls make lags behind that of boys.
- Transferable skills for learning and life are promoted well through the curriculum and students develop competence in the use of information and communication technology (ICT), problem-solving and collaborative working. Attendance trends have showed steady improvement since the last inspection and are above average. Students generally arrive on time for school and there are low proportions of persistent absentees. However, this positive picture

masks higher absence rates among Year 11 students, particularly among girls.

- Students told inspectors that the school is a caring community where they feel safe. This is largely reflected in a range of surveys among parents and students over time. Students feel that bullying is not an issue and, if it happens, it is dealt with seriously. There are very few incidents of racism. Inspectors observed good behaviour and a calm, relaxed and friendly atmosphere in and around the school. Students comment positively on the introduction of vertical tutor groups and the impact this has had on social harmony and their ability to make friends across the school. The positive school ethos is reinforced by the quality of care and support from staff, students' maturity and their heightened moral and social development. Personal and citizenship education prepares students well for their lives through instilling a strong sense of the importance of healthy and safe living and it provides valuable opportunities for them to develop spiritually. The positive awareness that students have of being healthy and their high participation in sports and exercise was endorsed by the achievement of Healthy School status last November.

- Calthorpe Park has had a long tradition of encouraging students to have a positive impact on the life of the school and the wider community. Students soak up with enthusiasm the wide and increasing range of opportunities that come their way. This can be seen, for example, in the work of the 'Green Group' to improve the environment and in the part that students play in interviewing staff and new providers such as caterers.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

- Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that teaching and the use of assessment to support learning are good. Inspectors observed a significant proportion of outstanding teaching. In good or better lessons, teachers are skilled practitioners who plan their lessons well and use a variety of activities and technological resources to cultivate a learning environment that stimulates and challenges learners. Assessment is used well to inform planning and teachers use modelling and questioning highly effectively. Teachers are adept at using probing questions to check students' understanding and help them to 'think wider'. In the best lessons these features merge seamlessly. This brings out the very best in the students and they make rapid progress. Students are encouraged to develop skills in evaluating their own work and that of others, and to hone their independent learning and collaborative working skills. Students with additional needs receive very good support in lessons and this is one of the reasons that they make such good progress.
- In the few instances where teaching does not reach this high standard, some students are less engaged and their attention and behaviour wanes. Although data is used well by most teachers to assess, plan and monitor learning, occasionally it is not of the same high standard. In less effective lessons teachers do not provide written feedback or mark homework regularly enough to inform students about their progress and develop their learning.
- Students benefit from a curriculum that promotes their personal development well and contributes appreciably to the high standards they achieve. It is becoming increasingly tailored and responsive to students' aspirations and needs. Subjects such as photography are offered in response to popular demand and students perform well. There is a good range of opportunities for those who are more able to pursue courses that stretch them. Work-related accreditation through the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness motivates students to achieve very well. The impact of specialist subjects is evident in the positive use of ICT to engage learners in lessons. Numerous enrichment opportunities are valued by students. The school is working collaboratively with other providers to introduce a Creative and Media Diploma in 2010.
- Students receive very good personalised care, guidance and support, and priority is given to ensuring that the needs of the more vulnerable are met. Excellent pastoral systems mean that the staff know the individual needs of students well and can target support and intervention accordingly. More effective systems for the management of behaviour and attendance are reflected in marked improvements since the last inspection. Staff provide very good support for students making transitions and, consequently, Year 7 students settle in well, and Year 11 students have a clear understanding of what they want to do to further their careers and how they can achieve their goals.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

- Calthorpe Park benefits from a dynamic and ambitious headteacher who is very well supported by a strong senior leadership team and an increasingly effective team of middle managers. There is a shared sense of common purpose and responsibility among staff to secure continuous improvement and meet challenging targets at all levels. This is underpinned by incisive analysis, accurate evaluation, sound planning and a culture of continuous professional development. The governing body provides valuable support and challenge for the school. In line with their cycle of regular self-evaluation they will be reviewing their impact in July in order to identify ways in which they can be even more effective. Resources are used in a targeted way to very good effect.
- The school meets its requirements in respect of equalities legislation and the staff promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination well. They have created an ethos of inclusion which enables students to flourish. Assessment systems provide the school with an accurate understanding of the performance and participation of all groups of students and this helps leaders and managers to fine-tune and adjust priorities so that any emerging gaps between groups are addressed. The strong contribution to community cohesion follows from a clear strategy based on a very good understanding of the school and its wider community. The school has received the foundation award for its international contribution, and is looking to expand this work. Other activities are more established, perhaps most strikingly, the school's hosting of an annual model United Nations event. This brings a wide range of students from other schools together to discuss the cultural, economic, global and social issues that affect young people. It also provides great opportunities for students to contribute positively to the wider community of schools.
- The staff give prominence to child protection and this is reflected in the quality of training, staff awareness and procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of students. The school meets statutory requirements regarding the safe vetting of its workforce. Procedures for critical incidents are effective and guidance, for example on the use of new technologies, is provided to students and parents. Staff are tenacious in responding to any concerns about students' well-being and go the extra mile to ensure that they are followed up.
- Highly effective partnerships contribute exceptionally well to the school's success and reflect its outward-facing work. This is reflected in a variety of ways, such as its contribution to the 14–19 consortium, the impact of the

specialism on local primary schools and in a partner secondary school, and excellent links with the Locality Team, and services such as Connexions and the youth service. Partnership with parents and carers are also notable and this is reflected in the positive comments received from the majority who completed the inspection questionnaire. The school is constantly looking at ways this could be better and this can be seen in the action it takes to respond to views expressed by the parents' forum, and its quest to further improve communication channels with parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a good response from parents and carers bearing in mind the short time available during this unannounced inspection. Most of the responses show very high levels of satisfaction with the quality of education and care being provided by the school. There were a few constructive comments and criticisms made by a small number of parents but no appreciable trends. Some comments related to poorer behaviour in some lessons, variation in the quality of communication, particularly about the progress of their children, and inconsistency in the quality of homework. Other parents commented positively about the quality of communication, the specific support their children are receiving, especially those with additional needs, and the general quality of the support, care and teaching provided by staff in the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Calthorpe Park School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 181 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 2,039 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	66	12	1

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

16 June 2009

Dear Students



Inspection of Calthorpe Park School, Fleet, GU51 5JA

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we arrived unannounced to inspect your school. We were very struck by your good behaviour, not just to us, but to each other and with staff. The vast majority of your parents who wrote to us believe that you go to a good school and we agree. In many ways your school is even better than that. We say this because your end-of-year examination and test results are so impressive. This is because of the good teaching you receive, but also because of how expertly the school is led by Mrs Anwar and her staff. This success is not just down to the school's staff – it is also a credit to you and the good progress you make. We saw that you enjoy your learning and you work really well together. Your concentration in lessons and the range of questions you ask your teachers shows a real appetite to learn.

In most of your lessons the teaching is at least good and often it is superb. This is because teachers are skilled in making the activities interesting and meaningful and help you to understand and develop good learning skills by the questions they ask. We looked at some exercise books and we could see that, in some instances, the advice your teacher was giving you could be a bit more specific in helping you to do even better. While you do really well most of the time, we could see in some lessons that teachers do not always keep a careful-enough eye on how you are doing, to make sure that you all make good progress.

You said that you feel very safe and that you like the house system which helps you get on well together. You enjoy the range of lessons and other activities that the school provide. You told us how some of these help you to keep healthy and safe. We were impressed with the number of ways you contribute to the school and the many ways you help with wider community. All in all you are right to be proud of your school and the work you do. We looked closely at how well you attend school and we saw that attendance rates in Years 7 to 10 are better than in most schools. However, the attendance of some of you in Year 11, particularly the girls, could be better. We have asked the school to encourage those of you further down the school to continue to attend as well as you do, and to carry this on when you come into Year 11.

We wish you the very best for your futures, especially those of you who were taking exams when we came.

Yours faithfully

John Kennedy
Her Majesty's Inspector

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