

Warlingham School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125255
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328325
Inspection date	17 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Maria Dawes 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1558
Sixth form	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Childs
Headteacher	Miss Alison Woodhouse
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2005
School address	Tithepit Shaw Lane Warlingham CR6 9YB
Telephone number	01883 624 067
Fax number	01883 624 026

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues in detail: achievement and standards particularly at Key Stage 3 and for more able students, the curriculum, the impact of specialist status on all aspects of the school's provision and the impact of leaders and managers in raising achievement. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, other documents provided by the school, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff, governors and students, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Warlingham School is a larger than average comprehensive school with a large sixth form taking students from both Surrey and the London Borough of Croydon. It has been a Business and Enterprise Specialist School since September 2004. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased over the last few years and is now in line with the proportion found in schools nationally. However very few of these students speak English as an additional language or are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly with moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, is now similar to the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Warlingham is a good school with an outstanding sixth form. There is a shared vision amongst all staff to improve the outcomes and achievement of all students and they are increasingly willing to innovate and share to make this a reality. The school is a happy and positive community where students achieve increasingly well and develop into confident and successful young adults. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. 'We have been so pleased with Warlingham School - staff go the extra mile to help and the leadership appears to be very strong.' 'My daughter is so happy at Warlingham that she cried when she was ill and couldn't attend.' These views from two parents sum up the very large number of positive written responses received during the inspection.

Standards at Key Stage 4 have risen significantly since the last inspection and students make good progress. In particular, the percentage of students attaining five or more good GCSEs is high, and is well above the school's challenging targets and the national average. All students leave the school with at least one GCSE qualification. The use of data to set challenging targets for students and the identification and support of those who are underachieving has contributed strongly to the improvement in Key Stage 4 attainment. The senior leadership team hold individual departments to clear account for students' progress particularly in Year 11. The school acknowledges that it needs to refine these processes in order to ensure that the most able students make just as good progress as other groups of students.

In Years 7 to 9 students' progress, although satisfactory, is slower than in Key Stage 4. This is because the school has had a sharper focus on examination groups than on younger students. Senior leaders have already introduced appropriate plans to strengthen both the curriculum and teaching at Key Stage 3 to ensure greater challenge for all students.

Teaching is good and students are very well supported in their learning. The school's extensive monitoring of the quality of teaching indicates that it is improving and that more teaching is now good or outstanding than at the time of the last inspection. This is due to the school's drive to make 'Every Lesson a Good Lesson' supported by targeted staff training and a coaching programme. The school has identified the need to encourage more independent learning and greater challenge for some students in lessons in order to make teaching even better. Supporting this is the recently appointed team of Lead Practitioners who are already catalysing action to achieve further improvement.

Students enjoy school and their attendance is good. They are articulate and purposeful. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is always good and often exemplary. In most lessons students are keen to learn, listen to their teacher well and quickly follow the task given. This is because the school encourages good attitudes and these become stronger as the students move through the school. A high proportion of students take advantage of the large range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that the school offers. However, the school is aware that a minority of students do not participate and staff are beginning to monitor this carefully through the recently introduced achievement portfolios that provide a good record of a student's progress both academically and socially. Many students take on leadership roles or support others through, for example, peer mentoring schemes, community service in the local primary schools or sports coaching. Students' views are actively sought and taken seriously, through a variety of formal and informal means, including the Young Chamber and feedback on teaching

and learning. The Business and Enterprise specialism offers students a wide range of experiences to develop skills and knowledge that enhance their future economic well-being.

Students say that they feel safe and secure and know that there are always members of staff to support and help them. The house and year system provide two vehicles for individual support and guidance in addition to promoting motivation, teamwork and a sense of achievement amongst the students. Staff work well as a team to support students and in particular those most vulnerable. The Maple Room, a recently set up on-site unit, is providing support for students at risk of exclusion and has been successful in significantly reducing the number of exclusions, re-engaging learners and raising their self-esteem. Almost all parental questionnaires reflected the good support provided by staff.

Students are freely able to choose from a very good range of courses in Years 10 and 11 and this is translated into an individualised learning programme. The choices are targeted at the differing needs of students and the vocational and work-related programme has increased in partnership with local 14-19 networks. The school is currently considering its contribution to the diploma programme. The very recently introduced Year 7 Project, an innovative weekly programme which links together key skills with humanities and citizenship with a business dimension, is aimed at improving transition from Key Stage 2 and improving students' learning skills. The school's specialist status has improved the breadth of the curriculum for all and allowed students to choose a wider range of business orientated subjects. However, enterprise skills are not yet fully embedded or impacting on all subjects. The enrichment programme for the most able has been developed and now includes a wide range of activities including an annual residential trip. This has been highly beneficial in raising this group of students' self-esteem and in expanding their interests. However, it has not yet impacted consistently on their academic achievement.

The restructured senior leadership team has had a relentless focus on improving standards and is driving improvement apace. It is well supported in this by a committed group of middle managers who are held clearly accountable for student outcomes but feel very well supported by the senior team. The senior leadership team and governors have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development through rigorous monitoring and the use of a wide range of information. However, although the school has thorough plans to bring about further improvement, development plans do not always show rigorous success criteria or interim reviews, by which senior leaders and governors will judge the success of their actions. The governors act as critical friends and know the school well. They always have the interests of the students at heart. Staff, and in particular the headteacher, know the community the school serves thoroughly and have adapted provision to changing circumstances such as the increase in students from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds. The specialist school status outreaches into the local community and educational establishments and is responsive to their needs, promoting community cohesion. The school has improved many aspects of provision and outcomes since the last inspection and shows good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form has continued to improve since the last inspection and remains outstanding. A large majority of Year 11 students return to the sixth form in addition to an increasing number of students from other schools. Students are exemplary ambassadors for the school and demonstrate maturity, enthusiasm and commitment to their studies, extra-curricular activities and roles in both the school and the wider community.

Students' progress in the sixth form is good and early analysis of 2008 results shows that students attained higher results than in the previous year with the proportion of grades A and B increasing significantly. Results for vocational A and AS-levels are very high and here these students make outstanding progress from their starting points. The specialist status of the school has supported this development. Students and the school are rightly proud of the fact that all students last year achieved the Surrey Graduation Certificate. The curriculum in the sixth form is wide and varied. Students are guided and supported well and nearly all of those who stay on for sixth form complete their courses.

Sixth form students' contribution to community cohesion is commendable. Students actively work with younger students, local primary schools and youth clubs. They support business-related activities, raising significant amounts of money for charity and developing the school's partnership with a school in Namibia. The very able head of sixth form, together with his colleagues, sets a clear direction promoting highly effective education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Incorporate clear short-term and longer term milestone success criteria in school improvement planning against which progress can be judged.
- Ensure all students, including the higher attainers, make the progress of which they are capable at all key stages.
- Disseminate the best practice that has been developed in the school's specialism in Business and Enterprise so it impacts on all areas of provision.

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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	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	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	1
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	1
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**

30 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Warlingham School, Warlingham, CR6 9YB

Thank you for assisting us with the recent inspection of your school and for making us feel so welcome during our visit. We very much enjoyed meeting you and valued the discussions we had with you. We hope that you take the time to look at the full report but we thought you would like a summary of our findings.

Your school is a good school with an outstanding sixth form. Many of you, your parents and staff told us that your school is a happy, caring and exciting place to be with many opportunities on offer to you. We agree with this view. We found your behaviour to be very good and you are keen to work hard and learn. You develop into confident young people, readily take on responsibilities and make a very valuable contribution to the community.

You make good progress during your time in school and the standards that you attain at GCSE and A-level are high. This is due to effective teaching, very careful monitoring of your progress, guidance and, where necessary, extra support. However, we feel that you could make more progress during Key Stage 3 and in particular those of you who start school with the highest Key Stage 2 results could do even better. We have asked your staff to improve this. For your part you can ensure that you are always challenging yourselves and working as hard as you can.

The school's specialist Business and Enterprise status has also made a good contribution to improving the school. It has helped provide a large number of exciting enrichment activities for you to participate in that helps you develop many skills needed for your future lives. We are asking senior leaders to now make sure that you are using these skills in all of your lessons.

Your school is well led and managed and the headteacher, governors and staff are very capable of making it even better in the future and have good plans in place to enable the school to achieve this. In order to monitor how well the school is doing we have asked your headteacher and other leaders to set clear targets for themselves and check up on these on a regular basis.

With every best wish for your future.

Yours sincerely

Maria Dawes

Her Majesty's Inspector