

# Sackville School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126089
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	340919
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Jones 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1646
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	333
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Hollins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Robson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lewes Road East Grinstead West Sussex RH19 3TY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 57 lessons, saw 55 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, information about students' performance and questionnaires completed by staff, students and 252 parents and carers

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

- the current quality of students' learning and progress
- the effectiveness of teaching in meeting students' learning needs
- monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education by senior leaders.

## Information about the school

Sackville School is much larger than most secondary schools. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds, but most are White British and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Approximately one third of students come from primary schools in local authorities other than West Sussex. The school is a specialist engineering school and has been appointed as a 'Leader in Space education'. Amongst many other awards, the school has gained International School status, Artsmark silver and sports partnership awards

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Sackville is a good school that works hard to ensure all students succeed. Students come to the school with overall below-average attainment. They make good progress and reach standards by the end of Year 11 that are above the national average even when taking into account the dip in results in 2009. Many then choose to stay on at the school and go into the sixth form where they continue to make good progress. The school's strong emphasis on a caring, inclusive ethos results in all students achieving equally well. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least good and, in some cases, very good progress because of the very good individual support they receive.

Students are proud of their school and feel very safe and well cared for. Parents mostly support the school's high expectations of their children and feel the school is a safe and a happy place. There are very good relationships between staff and students and students behave well both in and out of lessons. Students reported that 'bullying is always taken very seriously and acted on very effectively'. They were particularly impressed with the way staff maintain confidentiality and, as one student said: 'often enemies become friends'.

Students enjoy their education and are eager to be involved in school life. They make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. They spoke very highly of the recent 'Peace One Day' initiative as helping them to 'learn we can all work together'. The students have a strong voice throughout the school and know their opinions will be listened to and treated with respect by all staff. Students are growing into mature, sensible young adults with a strong sense of community responsibility. Students have a good understanding of the factors important for a healthy lifestyle and many take part in the wide range of sports activities available. However, the school canteen is still most popular on Friday when chips are on the menu!

Effective teaching results in good learning where students are engaged and interested in the variety of activities. Teaching is particularly successful where students are stretched and challenged, although not all teachers make enough use of probing questions to test understanding. Some teachers are skilful in developing and consolidating learning.

Through good use of assessment information, most know exactly where each student is in their learning and when they are ready to take the next steps. However, this practice is not consistent across all teaching and departments. Support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is less effective where some teachers do not make enough use of the very good information they receive on their students to plan for their individual needs.

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The school takes outstanding care of the students and staff make strenuous efforts to ensure successful liaison with agencies from the different local authorities. This has ensured successful integration of students from local areas and well beyond.

The quality of education continues to improve under good leadership that is responsive and flexible to the changing needs of the school population. This is supported by accurate and honest self-evaluation systems that give a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The constant drive to ensure all students reach their full potential secures good capacity for further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Disseminate existing good assessment practice and ensure all staff use assessment strategies consistently so that:
  - students' work is carefully and regularly marked
  - students understand the levels they are reaching and know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Ensure all teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of individual students more closely through:
  - making consistent use of guidance on individual students' particular learning needs, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - using key, probing questions that challenge students' understanding.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Students make good progress in lessons and enjoy learning, especially where they are actively involved. They are keen to do well and concentrate hard, responding enthusiastically to stimulating work and opportunities to think for themselves. Students are very generous in their support for each other and collaborative learning is particularly successful. Consequently, the results students achieve in GCSE examinations are above average with a strong performance across most subjects. The percentage of students gaining five A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is consistently above that found nationally. Outcomes in the specialist engineering subjects of mathematics, science and design and technology are good and make a significant contribution to students gaining good life skills that prepare them for education, training and employment.

The vast majority of students come to school regularly and on time and attendance is above average. The strong student voice means that many are actively involved in the school community and their contribution is significant both in school and the wider community. In particular, students have a growing interest in ethical issues such as those raised through the school's international status. They are keen to work with students in other countries through their enthusiastic support for the 'connecting classrooms' project. Students show a mature interest in spiritual, moral and social issues such as ecological developments and worked hard to help the school gain Fairtrade

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Status.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Good quality teaching maintains high levels of challenge in lessons and good pace that keeps students 'on their toes' and focused on their learning. Outstanding lessons are planned to stimulate students' thinking about the way they learn and then put this into action supported by the creative use of resources. For example, information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning by both teachers and students and has been enhanced through the school's specialist status. Teachers are given good information about the learning needs of individual students, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where lessons are not as successful, teachers do not give enough consideration in their planning to these needs or to checking students' understanding. Where marking and assessment is used as intended, students' success is clearly identified and good guidance given on how to improve, but this is not always the case.

A flexible approach is adopted to curriculum planning and this is regularly reviewed to

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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maintain its relevance to students' needs and interests. A rapid response to issues as they arise ensures that the curriculum provides very good support for learning. For example, in order to improve the motivation of students towards modern foreign languages, a very successful fast-tracking system has been introduced and almost half of the students take a language GCSE at the end of Year 9. This very good curriculum is enhanced by the outstanding and extensive range of activities provided outside of lessons. These are very well attended and the majority of students are involved.

Staff know their students extremely well. Students and their parents and carers have every confidence in the high levels of care the school provides. The welfare of students is monitored carefully. Students who are vulnerable or at risk are identified effectively and given very good support. The school works very effectively with a wide range of different external support agencies from the four local authorities with students in the school. One outcome is good transition arrangements from many different primary schools that are appreciated by parents.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and her effective senior team are united in their commitment to helping all students in their care achieve their best. Good self-evaluation draws on a wide range of information to focus on key priorities for improvement. Most managers routinely make use of the outcomes of secure monitoring procedures to plan for successful improvements. Challenging performance targets are used successfully in most areas to raise achievement. Progress towards meeting those targets is monitored carefully to ensure good value for money.

No form of discrimination is tolerated and equality of opportunity is promoted very successfully. This is illustrated by the good progress made by vulnerable students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As part of the high quality care for the students, robust procedures are in place to ensure their safety and all current safeguarding requirements are met. Staff have been suitably trained in child protection and the school encourages a sensible attitude among students to keeping themselves safe. The school is active in promoting cohesion within its own community, in the local area and through international links as part of its status as an International School.

The school maintains good communication with parents and carers through strategies such as the 'Reports Afternoons' and frequent use of questionnaires. The governing

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body has a good understanding of its role in supporting and challenging the school. Governors are reflective and always consider how best they can work with the school and evaluate their input.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Sixth form**

Students coming to the end of Key Stage 4 receive very good information and preparation for entering the sixth form. As a result, the numbers of students staying on into the sixth form are increasing. The school takes excellent care of the students and they receive a very good induction programme in Year 12 as well as guidance for their future beyond the sixth form. Students make good progress in relation to their wide variety of starting points and achieve examination results that are above those found nationally. In most lessons, students are well taught by good subject- specialist teachers who encourage students to use a wide range of learning styles and develop their research skills. In some lessons, the pace of learning slows when teachers talk too much, reducing opportunities for students' active participation. Students are set challenging targets, their progress is reviewed regularly and they are given constructive guidance on how to improve the standard of their work. Flexible provision and a good selection of sixth-form courses offers a broad range of experiences that meet the differing needs of the students.

Students are proud of their school, are very active members of the school community and good role models for the rest of the school. They lead and support many clubs and junior classes as well as being very involved in charity and voluntary work such as community sports leaders. In particular, some students regularly spend evenings



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teaching computer skills to older people from the University of the Third Age; an activity much appreciated by the older learners!

Effective leadership has ensured that the sixth form has improved since the last inspection. Students have a confident and strong voice in the school and know their opinions are valued. Regular and clear communication with parents and carers ensures that students receive very good support which is undoubtedly contributing to improving standards.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were very supportive of the school. A very small minority felt that the school did not help their child to have a healthy lifestyle, a criticism with which a few students agreed. The inspection found little evidence to support this view. A similarly small minority of parents and carers felt that the school did not give them enough help to support their own child's learning. There was little evidence that this was a widespread concern and the vast majority felt well informed.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sackville School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 252 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1650 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	28	125	58	19	9	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	73	29	133	61	4	2	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	28	132	61	19	9	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	28	140	65	9	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	21	155	71	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	17	139	64	28	13	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	14	156	72	25	12	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	22	134	62	13	6	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	25	131	60	19	9	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	27	131	60	15	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	18	137	63	17	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	64	29	136	63	8	4	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	33	133	61	8	4	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



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8 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Sackville School, East Grinstead, RH19 3TY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and being in your lessons. We were particularly impressed by the pride you take in your school. This letter is to tell you what we found.

- Sackville is a good school with a good sixth form
- Your achievement is good; you make good progress and reach above average standards by the end of Year 11
- You tell us you feel very safe in the school and learn a lot in your lessons when they are lively and interesting. You really enjoy school, attend regularly and on time.
- You make an excellent contribution to the school and are keen to take on responsibilities. A large number of you are involved in activities both in school and beyond.
- The very good curriculum helps you with this and many of you take part in the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.
- The school cares for you extremely well and there is always someone to help if needed.
- Many of your teachers plan lessons that will keep you interested and help you to learn successfully, but teachers do not always tell you enough about the standard of your work and how to improve.
- The headteacher and her staff work hard to make sure you achieve the best you can.

We have asked the school to look at the following areas to help you improve:

- make sure all teachers mark your work regularly, help you to understand the levels you are reaching and to know what to do to improve your work
- make sure teachers plan lessons that meet your individual learning needs.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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