

Epsom and Ewell High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125305
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	342825
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Scott HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	712
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Richardson
Headteacher	Mr Alex Russell
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
School address	Ruxley Lane West Ewell Epsom KT19 9JW
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at 30 lessons and met with groups of students, staff and the Interim Executive Board (IEB). They observed the school's work, and looked at policies and other school documentation and the school's own student progress tracking information. Evidence and observations from previous monitoring visits were also included for consideration.

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

- the contribution made by the languages department
- the development of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Epsom and Ewell High School is smaller than most comprehensive schools. It has a growing sixth form and a hearing resource base. The proportion of students whose first language is believed not to be English is higher than found in most schools. Students of minority ethnic heritage are represented in similar proportions to the national average. There is a greater proportion of students with statements of special educational needs than found in most other schools. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. This include students with hearing impairment, social, behavioural and emotional difficulties, and specific and moderate learning difficulties.

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

1

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Epsom and Ewell High School provides students with outstanding care, guidance and support that results in confident and committed learners who demonstrate their appreciation for the school's work through their outstanding behaviour.

Students make good progress overall. The commitment of the school team to improve teaching and to put students at the centre of all things has ensured that the improvement in progress has been dramatic. In some subjects, including English, students make outstanding progress.

Teaching in the school is good overall but there is much outstanding practice. The good relationships between students and teachers are very positive and students have a clear work ethos that is focused on learning. The quality of lessons demanded by students and the high level of subject knowledge of staff ensure a real cooperative culture is present in the school.

The leadership of the headteacher has quickly developed within the school the clear direction, highly ambitious goals and an encouraging and supportive ethos driven by success for students. This passion is now prevalent in staff and leaders at all levels. They monitor carefully using direct observations and analysis of students' progress information. Well-developed communication systems and collaborative work between heads of year and heads of department aid the effective targeting of appropriate interventions to ensure students are challenged.

The IEB has been highly focused and successful in balancing the challenge with support and nurture to ensure outcomes for students are maximised. The governors are successful in ensuring the school has effective policies and these are monitored well. The commitment and passion that they have demonstrated is truly commendable. Students are at the heart of their work and so they complement the school ethos well. They talk regularly with staff and students and seek to validate the work of the school with the use of external moderation. The leadership of senior staff and the IEB combine to demonstrate the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.

The sixth form is an integral part of the school and now gives students a clear focus and wider opportunities to develop further. It is inclusive, encourages all students to go on to further learning, raises aspirations and has high expectations of students. The sixth form is extremely well led and has made rapid and sustainable improvements, not least of which are the good outcomes for students.

The languages department is a strength within the school and is successful at promoting

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language learning. The department achieves well with students and has a long history of success. It is leading elements within the school to develop teaching practice further and this is much appreciated by other heads of department. The range of languages available to study is growing. There is also effective support for students to complete accredited courses in their native language. In recent years, this has included 12 different languages being successfully studied by students.

The students of Epsom and Ewell High school are motivated, articulate, polite and have a clear focus on learning. They are clear about the part they play in the school's development and are eager participants in school life.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further by:
 - developing teaching by ensuring that the best practice is spread further and teaching in all areas is consistent
 - ensuring opportunities are more closely matched to individual needs
 - ensuring that the outstanding practice in using assessments is used effectively in all areas.

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

The staff and students work very well together to ensure that students make good progress overall. Most students join the school with test results at Key Stage 2 that are well below average. Students feel valued by the school and engage in learning. Attainment by the end of Year 11 and by the end of Year 13 is broadly average overall with some areas within the school securing results that are above average or high.

Students feel safe in the school and many students informed inspectors about how well the school community gets on and works together. Students are involved in raising money for charities and have a growing group, the Junior Leadership Team, that is developing the student voice, wider involvement and understanding of life in school, the wider community and international communities.

There is a strong sense of fair play amongst students and they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Students demonstrate a pride in their school and attendance is above average. They are well prepared for the next steps in learning and for life beyond school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There is much to commend in the quality of teaching in Epsom and Ewell school. Teaching has developed extensively in recent times. There has been a clear and structured plan to ensure students are given high quality experiences in the classroom and beyond. Teaching of the highest standard is not uncommon in the school. In these lessons, students are motivated and engaged in learning because they are given work and support that matches well their own learning needs and current knowledge. In addition in these lessons, opportunities to work independently are well developed through effective formative assessments and self-assessment strategies, and learning is fun because of a clear context and very good relationships between students and staff. The transformation of learning is still developing and there is no complacency in the school despite the success and the extremely hard work already undertaken. Rather, there is a raised aspiration by staff and increased demand from students that teaching is improved still further. There have been many difficulties the school has had to overcome to ensure that lessons are always challenging students. There is a strong sense of accountability now and all staff, new and old, teachers, teaching assistants and support staff work well and communicate effectively to support learning.

The languages department has contributed to the provision of high quality teaching support resulting in the effective use of technologies across the school. It has also provided support in developing teaching.

There is a very effective tracking system in the school. This allows leaders in the school to have meaningful conversations about progress of individual students and general trends in the school. This is used well by most teachers to plan lessons and ensure all

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students are challenged appropriately. Some lessons do not, however, plan enough challenge and support for individual students and so progress slows.

The curriculum in the school offers the students a broad range of experiences and has developed extensively in recent times to ensure all students can be successful with increasingly personalised pathways. The good current curriculum is still developing and clear plans to further meet the needs of students in the future have started to be implemented.

The school cares for students exceptionally well. The needs of students are well understood and the hard messages and support for students and parents and carers are clearly given. The school raises aspiration for students and is clear about its role to support individual success. This is a very inclusive school where the individual counts. Students are encouraged to get involved and to reach the highest of standards. Guidance for careers is effective and students are supported well in their applications for university and other higher studies. The school is clear that the best support that it can provide is to instil a confidence in students, and help students develop their key personal attributes and gain appropriate qualifications to open doors in their life. The school does this well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: 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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

At all levels, the school is clear about what it does well and builds on this enthusiastically. The school knows what needs to be improved and tackles this with energy and passion. Opportunities are siezed upon. The school has successfully established links with local businesses and is developing its specialist college strategy to develop the whole school further.

The ambition and ethos of the school is communicated by all members of the community by their actions, and the passion and enthusiasm with which they talk. The school staff work very well together towards a common goal. There have been clear structural and systematic improvements to ensure that the capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding in this learning organisation. The school has not only crossed inspection grade boundaries since its last inspection but has demonstrated outstanding performance in many.

The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunities and has been successful in developing a harmonious learning environment where difference is valued and all

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individuals can contribute. The school is working hard to develop a wide range of partnerships to further community cohesion. The success so far locally and nationally is complemented by the work that is now underway to develop a greater international dimension.

The IEB has demonstrated a commitment and rigour to governing the school. It has supported the school and holds it to account in a very effective manner. The systematic approach to monitoring and collecting direct evidence from staff, students and consultants gives it the reassurances it seeks in plotting the school's rapid progress. The school meets all of the current safeguarding requirements and much of the school's work is considered best practice.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Sixth form

The sixth form is increasingly successful as there is clear and strong leadership, excellent relationships between staff and students, and positive attitudes to learning by the articulate and mature students. An analytical approach to the development of provision is improving outcomes for students. Students' attainment is improving rapidly and many sixth form students make good or outstanding progress.

Students in the sixth form appreciate the support and opportunities the school now provides, and are very active in the school contributing to mentoring younger students and organisation of events, and raising money for charity.

The sixth form is very much a part of the 11'18 ethos at Epsom and Ewell. The inclusive approach ensures that aspirations are raised and opportunities for all students are

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available to make further progress in education.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
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	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers were not surveyed during this inspection. The school has clear and effective procedures in place for engaging parents and carers in the school's work. Increased attendance at consultation evenings and the improved communication has resulted in a more open and clearer communication. Parents and carers with concerns contact the school and the school works with them to ensure the best outcomes for students.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



19 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Epsom and Ewell High School, West Ewell, KT19 9JW

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to the team when we came to inspect your school. Your contributions in meetings, in lessons and around the school were most useful in understanding what it is like to be a student at Epsom and Ewell High School.

The school has changed a great deal over the last year. We think that the school no longer needs to be in special measures as it is now a good school. You have contributed a great deal to this development. You have demonstrated maturity and commitment to the school and to your learning. We think that behaviour in the school is now outstanding. You look after the school and appreciate the facilities you have.

It was really good to see how you use the seating around the school and the other facilities such as the learning centre. It was particularly good to see how much you demand in lessons. Many of the teachers we saw teach outstanding lessons. You are aware of lessons that are not as successful, but you make the best of these lessons and show your commitment to learning. You are clear about what makes a good lesson and help to ensure lessons are not disrupted. You must keep this positive attitude and help to drive improvements as you have already had a positive effect.

The school cares and supports you very well and you appreciate the work that the school does. You will not be surprised that the leadership of the school has been judged as outstanding. The headteacher, heads of departments and all staff contribute to moving the school forward. The governors have also played a crucial role in this and they are among the most effective governors I have seen. You are also beginning to play a bigger part in the leadership of the school with the Junior leadership team. Make sure you seize this opportunity to build an even stronger school for the future.

It has been a privilege to see the school grow and I am sure you will continue to help this process. Good luck in all that you do and enjoy all that you achieve in life.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott

Her Majesty's Inspector

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