

Durrington High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126083
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340917
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Taylor-Bennett 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	12–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Angus Watts
Headteacher	Ms Sue Marooney
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. During the inspection, 45 lessons were seen, involving the observation of 44 teachers. In addition, meetings were held with governors, local authority representatives, staff and groups of students. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's development plan, its self-review, analyses of the attainment and progress of its students, records of lesson observations, policies, student and staff questionnaires and 157 parental questionnaires.

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

- patterns in the nature of the significant underperformance of a minority of students by the end of Key Stage 4 in previous years, and the effectiveness of the school's work to eliminate this in the future
- the impact on the quality of outcomes for students of the school's work to teach business and enterprise skills
- the extent to which feedback on students' work enables them to achieve well.

Information about the school

Durrington High School is a larger than average school with a specialism in business and enterprise, serving the west of Worthing. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly less than average, although there are a few students at the school at the early stages of learning English. The school's population reflects the local area: the proportion who experience deprivation is in line with the national average, but students come from a very wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The school holds a number of awards, including Artsmark Gold and the Sportsmark.

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

Durrington High School provides a good education for its students. It is an improving school and this is reflected in the positive attitudes that are prevalent. As one parent put it, 'This school just gets better and better!'

The range and the extent of the social and learning needs of some students are significant, but outcomes for all groups are good. Students achieve well over their time at the school and they make good progress towards challenging targets. Attainment is currently in line with national averages and it is improving.

The quality of the systems to care for, guide and support students is good and complements the high academic expectations. The school has identified the reasons for the significant underperformance by the end of Key Stage 4 of some students in previous years. There are now effective systems in place to support the progress of current students who may be at risk.

The school's specialism makes an important contribution to its success. Students develop business and enterprise skills in business lessons and across the curriculum, and these skills support their learning and equip them well for the future.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and she has established good systems to ensure that the school's development priorities are met each year. Teaching is good and supports the good progress made by students. There are fewer outstanding lessons than are normally found in schools where so much teaching is good. Sometimes students are quite passive in their learning and would benefit from being engaged in more discussion and practical work.

Teachers know their students well. However, the extent of individualised provision in some classrooms is limited and the quality of the marking and feedback on some written work is not good enough.

The curriculum is well designed and meets the wide ranging needs of students in all year groups. Extra-curricular provision is a strong feature of the life of the school and students appreciate the many ways to be involved in sport, music and other activities. The school monitors the quality of students' achievements very carefully. It does not yet have systems of sufficient rigour to monitor other types of outcomes that would support its mission for them to be outstanding.

The school's capacity to improve further is good. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved in several important ways and there is now better teaching and better student progress. The drive for further improvement from the headteacher and her senior staff and middle leaders is supported by good development planning and honest self-evaluation.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of teaching that is outstanding to 25% by 2012 by:
 - developing a whole-school approach to providing students with feedback on their work that gives precise information about how to improve
 - ensuring that lessons are planned and resourced to meet the needs of all students
 - involving all students in lessons more actively, encouraging them to ask questions, be confident enough to make mistakes and learn from them, offer each other challenge in lessons and discuss ideas more often.
- Ensure that all students get the best from the good provision in the school, and the wide range of opportunities offered to them, by:
 - extending the good practice in the monitoring of different groups of students' achievement to a wider range of outcomes
 - using the information obtained to identify ways of securing outstanding outcomes for all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The outcomes for students are consistently good across the school. The attainment of students underwent a step change that brought it into line with national averages three years ago and it is continuing to improve, due to good teaching and high expectations. Students approach their work with interest, and their good progress is a reflection of both the good teaching and the positive ethos in the school. In the best lessons, students learn to think and challenge, and their good behaviour supports their progress and results in their enjoyment of the work. Any inattentiveness in lessons is usually associated with students not being given sufficient opportunity to see the relevance of the work or to be active enough in their learning.

Behaviour around the site is good. Students feel safe and secure in school and treat each other with respect and consideration. There is a lively but good-natured atmosphere in corridors and communal spaces. At the time of the inspection, Year 11 students had completed examinations and were in school for their last day. The atmosphere was calm and pleasant; this is an indication of the quality of the relationships developed over four years between students and staff. Students are developing a good understanding of how to establish and maintain healthy lifestyles, and many take full advantage of the two hours of sport each week on the timetable, the broad extra-curricular provision and the opportunities to eat healthily in the dining room. Students contribute strongly to their school. Staff have developed ways to canvas opinion and work alongside students on specific projects, through the student executive committee. For example, students have been working with staff to develop a new behaviour code, and many take the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence, and gain very useful experience, by working closely with a range of local businesses

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through the school's business and enterprise specialism. Students regularly contribute to cultural and social events in the town, and generously support local and international charities, such as Sussex Air Ambulance and the recent Haiti appeal. Their cultural development is good, due to the range of opportunities presented in and beyond the curriculum for trips and visits. The quality of students' artwork around the school enhances already pleasant surroundings and is often visually stimulating and inspirational.

Students are well prepared for future education, training and employment because of their enterprise skills and the range of experiences offered to them. They apply their well-developed numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills confidently in lessons, on work experience and in activities such as young enterprise projects. Attendance is good because students see the importance of school to their lives, and persistent absence has fallen from a level that generated concern a few years ago.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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?

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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The quality of teaching is good. When teaching is outstanding, it involves students very actively in their learning. In one mathematics lesson, a student took the lead at the whiteboard and others questioned him about his strategy to solve a problem, while the teacher supported skilfully and sparingly from the side. In lessons where progress is good or satisfactory, teachers tend to provide a technique or a framework within which learning can take place, but which does not allow for individuals to develop their own ideas or to see clearly the relevance and potential application of the subject matter. Verbal feedback to students about progress is useful and positive but the marking of work is very variable in its capacity to support good progress. The best provided clear advice, but too much marking was limited to checking that work has been completed to an acceptable standard. Learning strategies are usually well matched to students' ability and need. There is often good liaison between teachers and teaching assistants but there is insufficient special provision for the needs of some students in some lessons. Many areas of the curriculum are successfully meeting the wide-ranging needs of students. There is opportunity to progress at appropriate rates in different subjects. For example, some very able students take AS-level Art in Year 11. The school works collaboratively with a number of other local schools and colleges in providing a range of vocational courses and the impact of this work on the achievement of students is significant. Students are appreciative of this development and there are well-established plans to broaden this provision at Key Stage 4 next year. All students follow a business and communications course to GCSE. At Key Stage 3 there is some innovative work to identify the best ways to develop business and enterprise skills in the curriculum and this provision will benefit more students next year.

The school prides itself on the good quality of the care it provides, resulting in good outcomes for students. During the inspection, students wanted to ensure that inspectors realised that staff look after them so well. For example, there is a relatively large proportion of students in the school whose welfare is overseen directly by the local authority. The school has established very good provision to meet their needs and it ensures that their progress towards good examination results and future education and training is secure. Staff have recently taken steps to address the issue of a number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities becoming disaffected in Key Stage 4, and their attendance and achievement falling to unacceptable levels. The school is now working with a range of outside agencies, and is adopting specific strategies to re-motivate students who have begun to attend poorly, and putting in place measures to identify and support 'at-risk' students early in Key Stage 3. It is too soon to see the impact of this good provision on outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2
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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher drives improvement in the school with passion and commitment. Her vision is translated into effective action by senior and middle leaders who are accountable for the quality of outcomes. The improvements evident in the school over recent years, and recognised by many parents and the local authority, are a direct consequence of this focused approach to securing good outcomes for students. Self-evaluation is thorough and enables the school to judge the effectiveness of innovations accurately and to see clear ways forward, giving the school a good capacity to improve further. The quality of teaching has been raised from satisfactory to good over the last three years, and staff make accurate and reliable judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. Senior staff are aware that securing good levels of attainment by improving the already good progress that students make will require a higher proportion of teaching that is outstanding. As an aspect of its emphasis on equality of opportunity, the rigour with which some outcomes are monitored is already good, and results in some well-targeted interventions to secure better provision for some groups.

The governing body carries out its responsibilities diligently and shows care and support for the continued development of the school. However, governors do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the school's strengths and development needs to enable them to provide rigorous and constructive challenge to the senior staff. The school values good working relationships with parents and carers and ensures good and regular communication about their child's progress and general school information. Some parents are already supported by the school in various ways and a few are involved actively in the life of the school. Governors and staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place and that the safety and welfare of all students is a priority. Senior staff and governors secure good value for money by maintaining good quality financial procedures and obtaining good outcomes for students.

The school is closely involved with its local community and, in the words of one parent, is playing an important role in 'taking Durrington forward'. It is not yet at the stage where is it formally evaluating this work to be able to plan in detail for the future.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Many parents expressed their recognition of the improvements evident in the work of the school over the last few years, and attributed them to the quality of the leadership. The overall level of satisfaction with the work of the school is very high and specific strengths identified by parents include the accent on safety, the quality of teaching and the extent to which individual needs are catered for. There were no clear patterns in the small number of concerns expressed. The findings of inspectors are entirely in keeping with parents' feeling that the school is good, and in the process of improving further. One parent summed this up by saying, 'I have nothing but praise for the school and am glad both my children have been here.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Durrington High 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 157 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1394 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	31	96	61	8	5	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	52	33	102	65	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	58	37	90	57	7	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	37	91	58	6	4	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	25	109	69	3	2	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	20	107	68	13	8	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	15	108	69	17	11	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)	49	31	95	61	9	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	31	99	63	5	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	30	89	57	14	9	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	19	100	64	12	8	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	63	40	84	54	5	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	41	85	54	5	3	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



2 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Durrington High School, Worthing BN13 1JX

Thank you for the warmth of your welcome when I and my team visited your school recently to inspect it. We all enjoyed meeting you, seeing you learn and enjoy each other's company around the site, and getting to know the school and its work. We agree with what many of you expressed to us when we spoke with you: your school provides you with a good quality of education. It has improved a lot over recent years and this trend is being maintained.

You can read the full report for yourselves on the Ofsted website but I have summarised the main findings here. Specific strengths of the school include the good outcomes it enables you to achieve. Examination results currently match national averages but your good progress means that attainment is improving. We saw that you are safe in school, and that you have a lot of opportunities to contribute to school and to the local community, and to develop some impressive business and enterprise skills. The teaching and the curriculum are good and the school shows a high quality of care for you.

Your headteacher and her staff have driven this improvement very successfully over recent years, and she knows how to make sure the school continues to flourish. We agreed that there are two actions that could help to move the school from good to outstanding. They are to:

- increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, by giving you better feedback on your work, meeting individual needs in the classroom better and giving you more opportunity to be more actively involved in learning
- achieve outstanding outcomes for students by monitoring how well particular groups achieve each outcome, and then plan for specific improvements.

You already play an important part in taking your school forward and this has been a major factor in its development so far. I hope that you will wish to work actively and closely with the senior staff on these and other improvements in the future. I would like to extend my very best wishes to you for your future happiness and success.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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