

Testwood Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116499
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357988
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	James Sage

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	898
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Walkling
Headteacher	Mr Ian Appleton
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. During the inspection, the team observed 45 teachers and 48 parts of lessons; during these observations, inspectors looked at samples of students' work and discussed these with them. Three meetings were held with different groups of students and discussions took place with a wide range of senior and middle leaders and with three members of the governing body, including the Chair. A large number of teachers took the opportunity to discuss aspects of the school with the inspection team. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the systems for tracking and monitoring students' progress along with the self-evaluation and improvement plan. Questionnaires from 130 parents and carers were also analysed, in addition to 169 from students and 31 from staff.

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

- How effectively has students' achievement in English been improved and sustained?
- To what extent are improvements in teaching and the use of assessment embedded across all curriculum areas? □
- How effectively does the school use challenging targets at all levels to raise attainment, and to support interventions to improve achievement?
- How effective are actions to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence?
- How effectively does the governing body hold senior and middle leaders to account?

Information about the school

This secondary school of average size achieved sports college status in 2005. The very large majority of students live close to the school and most are White British. The number of students has fallen in recent years as a result of a decline in numbers in partner primary schools. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The overall proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is very low. The college has achieved Healthy School Status and the Partnership Mark.

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

This is a good and improving school. Students enter the school with below average attainment and make good progress so that overall attainment at the end of Year 11 is average. Teaching, learning and progress were good or better in almost two thirds of the lessons observed, but too many lessons were satisfactory. Students achieve well overall because, where necessary, their progress is considerably enhanced by effective mentoring and other interventions arising from monthly progress checks.

All other outcomes for students are at least good and the extent to which students feel safe in the school is outstanding; this is supported by the views of their parents and carers. Students make the most of the extensive range of sporting and other activities the school provides and achieve well in them, although they are very self-critical about how well they adopt healthy lifestyles. The facilities that result from sports college status are used particularly well to encourage wide participation, and very successfully with many students who were initially reluctant to become involved. All aspects of care, guidance and support are good, and potentially vulnerable students are looked after outstandingly well. Substantial improvements in attendance and behaviour indicate the effectiveness of this support. The role of the heads of year has recently been enhanced to include academic monitoring and mentoring, and this is already having an impact on raising achievement.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets students' needs and aspirations well and contributes fully to improving their achievement. There are good progression routes onto post-16 courses. The school also prepares students well to consider options for later employment and higher education. Two recent curriculum changes are already having a positive impact on students' achievement, self-esteem and attitudes. Almost one in four students enter the school with low attainment; these students have an integrated core curriculum in Year 7 to ensure they make a good start in literacy, numeracy and learning skills. The provision of more BTEC courses in Years 9 and in Key Stage 4 has notably improved students' motivation as well as meeting their needs and aspirations more effectively.

The school has good capacity for sustained improvement. Senior leaders and governors are fully aware of its strengths, and key priorities for improvement are identified clearly; for example, the professional development programme matches exactly the weaker aspects of teaching identified by the inspection. Rigorous systems for monitoring students' progress provide middle and senior leaders, and class teachers, with precise information that is used well to identify and implement effective interventions to improve students' progress and the quality of provision. The governing body also use the sharp analysis of data well to hold both senior and middle leaders to account.

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However, not all teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that reflect high expectations for all students, engage them fully in their learning and include precise guidance on how to achieve consistently well. Similarly, not all middle leaders use it well to monitor and improve teaching in their subject.

The impact of specialist sports college status is clear; it is a source of pride for many students. The partnerships arising from the specialism also benefit the school and the wider community. Particularly good use of student self- and peer-assessment in physical education and in BTEC sport and dance is beginning to have a positive impact on practice in some other curriculum areas.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by increasing the proportion of lessons that are good or better to at least 80% by July 2011, through:
 - ensuring that lesson planning identifies clearly the steps in learning that students are expected to progress through
 - making better use of assessment information to ensure that teaching provides higher levels of challenge for all students
 - ensuring that whole-class teaching and questioning fully engage all students
 - providing more opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills.
- Ensure that all curriculum leaders make full use of data and information on students' achievement to monitor the quality of teaching in their subject(s) and intervene effectively when required.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Lesson observations and analysis of the school's comprehensive data show that standards are being maintained despite a fall in students' attainment on entry to the school. Improvement in attainment has been dramatic in mathematics, and there are signs of more rapid progress and improving attainment in English. Attainment in science has improved to above average, as it has in the specialist subjects. The progress students make in lessons is at least satisfactory, but too variable. This is either because insufficient account is taken of students' prior attainment or because they are not challenged to work at a high enough level. However, rapid detection through monthly checks and effective and targeted support and interventions for those who need it ensure that overall progress is good. Good attention is given to those students who might, for a variety of reasons, fall behind or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; their progress is very carefully monitored and these students make at least as good progress as others. The integrated curriculum for those students who enter the school below Level 4 in English, and often in mathematics, ensures that they are prepared well for the curriculum in Year 8 and beyond.

Attendance and persistent absence have been areas of concern for the school;

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attendance is now above average and students are very positive about coming to school. They move promptly between lessons with a very good sense of purpose. Behaviour around the school at lesson changeovers and at break and lunchtime is very good. Students support each other well and the school feels friendly and welcoming. Behaviour in lessons is more variable, but with very little really poor behaviour. Inattention and chatter are often the result of teaching that fails to fully involve students rather than inherent poor behaviour.

Students have a well-developed understanding of healthy eating, the need for exercise and the dangers of drugs and smoking. They also fully involve themselves in the life of the school and many of them in the wider community. Students' understanding of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain has improved and is now satisfactory. Students' skills in being independent learners are less well developed.

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	1
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?

The quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding. The best lessons have a brisk pace and students are fully involved, work with interest and behave very well.

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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Teachers use a range of activities to hold students' attention and ensure that they make good progress. The impact of the work the school has done on sharpening learning expectations and making these clear to students is evident in such lessons. However, too many lessons are overly teacher-directed and feature planned activities that are matched only to a narrow range of attainment. All teachers have access to precise information about students' prior and current achievement, but in the weaker lessons they do not use this information well enough to ensure that all students are challenged to make the progress they can. Questioning is not used effectively to ensure that all students are fully involved; this leads to inattention and talking that can affect the concentration of others. Learning expectations often do not make clear the steps students need to work through or indicate clearly how success can be achieved at different levels.

Lower-attaining students in Year 7 spend around half of their time with one teacher in one room covering English, mathematics, humanities, and personal development and learning skills. The success of this approach is clear from the students' good achievement, and the way most continue to make good progress in Year 8. The success of BTEC sport encouraged the school to extend the range of BTEC courses available to students in Years 9 and 10. Students on all of these courses work with great enthusiasm and are already achieving well. The school is considering carefully how to maximise the impact of specialist status on other aspects of the curriculum. The integration of 'learn to learn' into the personal development programme, so far up to Year 8, is equipping students with key learning skills. This is built on well by many, but not all, teachers and subjects. Not enough lessons develop independent learning skills as well as group work skills. Schemes of work are being developed well, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, to have much more focus on developing steps in learning rather than just coverage of topics.

The school cares well for its students and provides them with good guidance and support; the counselling support provided for students is highly valued by them. A comprehensive network of interrelated pastoral and academic support ensures that all aspects of students' well-being are taken care of well. Heads of year, and their support teams, play a key role in monitoring all aspects of individual students' welfare and achievement. Students are extremely positive about the monthly progress reports that keep them well informed and make them feel more involved in monitoring their own progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The sustained trend of improvement in key outcomes demonstrates that senior leaders and the governing body are effective in driving and securing improvement. They are supported well by most middle leaders, although some curriculum leadership is still only satisfactory. The school uses progress data well to inform self-evaluation, set challenging targets, and identify and plan interventions to improve the quality of the teaching and provision. Each senior leader's oversight of particular curriculum areas and a year group ensures that all aspects of students' personal and academic development are monitored carefully. Good attention is given to ensuring good equality of opportunity for all students. Internal exclusions are analysed carefully to identify individual or groups of students that could be a cause for concern.

Curriculum leaders are held to account well by senior leaders and the governing body, but a minority of middle leaders do not hold their own teaching staff fully to account. The performance management of teachers has improved to ensure a tight focus on students' achievement, but this is yet to have a full impact on improving the quality of teaching in a minority of lessons. The involvement of a group of students in evaluating the quality of teaching and the curriculum is a very positive development; their judgements are accurate and perceptive and taken seriously by senior leaders.

The governing body's excellent systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school enable them to support senior leaders, but to challenge when necessary. However, the school judged governance to be outstanding but improvements on the points raised by the previous inspection have not been rapid enough to support this judgement.

The school has good relationships with parents and carers and good efforts are made to involve as many as possible, although these have yet to take full effect. The forum on communication has led to improvements, and parents and carers particularly value the monthly assessment checks that keep them well informed about their children's progress. Their views are used effectively to inform strategic decisions. The school has developed a wide range of effective partnerships to support the curriculum and students' achievement and welfare, to broaden community involvement and to provide students with experiences to improve their future life chances. All safeguarding requirements are met and the school has adopted good procedures across all areas of its work. The school has undertaken a comprehensive audit of all aspects of community cohesion; it is clear about what is working well and was critical of its work in the national context, but evidence from students shows that this is now good.

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

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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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The responses from parents and carers are largely supportive of the school. A particularly high proportion feels very strongly that the school ensures that their children are safe, and keeps them well informed about their children's progress.

The proportion of parents and carers who feel that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively is relatively high. The school feels that there is an historical element to this as behaviour in the school was much worse in the past, but has improved significantly. The inspection team judge that behaviour around the school is now good. Some low-level concerns in lessons are largely the result of teaching not fully involving all students.

Some parents and carers do not feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. However, the school is fully aware of this and has already put in place effective procedures to improve the situation, not least the parents' forum. The school's own surveys of the views of parents and carers show this to be improving communications and involvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Testwood Sports College 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 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 898 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	33	76	58	10	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	28	89	68	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	46	66	51	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	34	78	60	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	22	92	71	7	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	23	89	68	6	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	17	85	65	10	8	1	1
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)	26	20	80	62	9	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	21	89	68	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	17	64	49	27	21	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	17	74	57	17	13	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	30	23	81	62	9	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	28	83	64	7	5	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



5 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Testwood Sports College, Totton SO40 3ZW

Following our visit to your school, I would like to thank you for your very friendly welcome and for taking the time to talk to us. You told us that you enjoy being at school and that you feel very safe. We were impressed by your behaviour around the school, your politeness and how willingly you talked to us.

We judged the school to be improving and good overall. These are the strengths in the school.

- The school cares well for all of you.
- You are involved well in the life of the school and participate highly in the many activities it provides for you.
- Your attendance is good and you are punctual to lessons.
- The school carries out frequent checks on your progress and keeps you well informed.
- The good curriculum meets your needs and aspirations well.

Your overall achievement is good because the school keeps a close eye on your progress and gives you help when you need it. However, too much teaching is no better than satisfactory and you do not make the progress you could in these lessons. We have asked the school to make improvements to the quality of teaching by making sure that all of you:

- are clear about what you are expected to do and learn
- have work that is challenging and helps you to make as much progress as you can
- are fully involved in the lesson
- are given more opportunities to learn independently.

The leaders in your school have a clear understanding of what it needs to do to continue to improve. They have your best interests at heart and will do all that they can to continue to make the school an even better place for you to learn. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

James Sage

Her Majesty's Inspector

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