

Chipping Sodbury School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109324
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	377912
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	855
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katie Mansfield
Headteacher	Gareth Millington
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 September 2008
School address	Bowling Road Chipping Sodbury South Gloucestershire BS37 6EW
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Age group	Error! Reference source not found.11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 39 lessons involving 35 teachers, observed tutorial sessions and attended assemblies. They held meetings with the Chair and a representative of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning documents including those relating to safeguarding, students' assessment information and work. In addition, inspectors analysed questionnaires from 140 parents and carers, and looked at others from staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The sustainability of recent improvements in students' GCSE performance.
- How well teachers use assessment information to plan lessons which take learning forward quickly and help students to take responsibility for improving their own work.
- The impact of the work of the senior leadership team and middle leaders in developing consistency across the school, particularly in teaching.
- The effectiveness of provision, including the impact of collaborative arrangements in the sixth form, in preparing students for further education or training.

Information about the school

Most students in this average-sized school are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below that found nationally, as is the proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The sixth form is run in collaboration with Brimsham Green School. The school has specialist technology status. The headteacher took up his post in January 2011. The school holds a number of national awards, including Healthy School, Sportsmark and International School 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This satisfactory school has built well on many of the good aspects of its work evident when it was last inspected, particularly those relating to students' personal development. It now has some outstanding features, including the extent to which students feel safe and contribute to school life and the local community. Students' attendance is high because they enjoy school and fully subscribe to its core values of 'respect, responsibility, integrity and aspiration'. Following its last inspection, students' attainment declined significantly, especially in the proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades in both English and mathematics. Attainment has risen again, and GCSE results are in line with the national average. Students now make good progress in most subjects. However, overall progress through the school is judged as satisfactory. This is because Year 11 students' progress was slower for some years, some students' progress in English is slower than in mathematics and science, and the proportion making the nationally expected rates of progress from the time they join the school in Year 7 remains below average. Consequently, students' achievement and the school's overall effectiveness are satisfactory rather than good despite recent improvement. In the sixth form, students' achievement is satisfactory, partly because students are not always challenged as effectively as they might be to become independent learners. Achievement is stronger in applied courses than in academic programmes because the level of challenge is more incisive.

Students' appreciation of school life is reflected well in the pride with which they wear the new uniform and talk about recent improvements. 'This school is a friendly place where all support each other,' is a typical comment which recognises the exceptional safeguarding practices and care, support and guidance they receive. Academic guidance is a growing strength of the school because assessment information is increasingly being used to pick up and address any underachievement at an early stage. This is a fundamental reason for the improvements being seen in students' progress. Students value the individual and practical support they are given through the mentoring system. Students are fully involved in all aspects of school life with focus groups giving their views on a range of issues, ranging from safeguarding to how they learn. They commented that the house system is a good addition to school life, 'adding edge, competition and identity'. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an integral part of the school, shown in students' respect and interest in the views of others and supporting campaigns to improve the lives of others. As a specialist school for technology, it has successfully engaged at a national

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level in activities such as the Greenpower Challenge, involving students and their families in developing their engineering skills while constructing endurance racing cars.

The rapid rate of improvement in students' attainment and progress shows the school's good capacity to sustain further improvement. Tracking data indicate that recent improvements are being built upon well. The headteacher has developed a strong, shared sense of teamwork across the school and introduced systems to ensure that staff have the support they need to meet their accountabilities. Teachers use the school's 'good lesson guide' consistently, ensuring that teaching is effective across the school and helping to boost students' performance. Staff and the governing body have an accurate awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and use this information effectively to target actions for change. For example, detailed strategies have been developed to promote students' literacy in other subjects, although the plan is at an early stage of implementation.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' attainment, particularly in English, by refining teachers' skills to:
 - make questioning more challenging to deepen students' understanding alongside their subject knowledge
 - implement the planned programme to promote literacy in other subjects.
- Improve students' achievements in the sixth form by developing their skills as independent learners.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Although still satisfactory, achievement is improving rapidly and students were seen to be making good progress in lessons during the inspection. This improvement is due to good teaching. Students respond well to the school's clear expectations in the 'Ready to Learn' programme. This is evident in the generally good presentation of work. Students particularly enjoy and have excellent attitudes in lessons which have a practical element or when learning is given a real-life context. This was seen in a lesson on data handling when the concept of sampling was related to the process of collecting inspection evidence. Students say that hands-on activities help them to consolidate their understanding of more theoretical aspects of their learning. Students concentrate well and are confident to ask for help when they find learning difficult. Only in a few lessons, for example when they are required to listen for a long time, students let their concentration wander. Similarly, on occasion, they do not work at the fast pace seen in most lessons. Students have a good understanding

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of the quality of their work and how to reach the increasingly challenging targets set for them because marking is regular and helpful. The additional support for Key Stage 4 students is effectively closing gaps in students' earlier knowledge and boosting their performance. The impact has been most noticeable in mathematics and science, where the proportions of students achieving A*-C grades in GCSE are above average. Although improving quickly, attainment in English remains lower.

Students are well known as individuals and support is well targeted to meet their needs. Consequently, all groups of students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily. The recent emphasis on addressing students' difficulties as they arise is seen in the much-improved and now good progress being made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Key Stage 3, so that they are being prepared well for later learning.

The school ethos is characterised by good behaviour and consideration for one another. Students' good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles is seen in the school's role in negotiating food standards in the canteen and in students' high usage of the new sports centre and dance studio. Awards for being a healthy school and achieving the Sportsmark are a testimony to success from these points of view. Students commented that 'Our voice is very important to us and we are listened to.' They are rightly proud of the mature way in which they represent students' views on school committees, such as the curriculum, pastoral and behaviour groups, and appreciate the changes that have been made over the last year. Students lead a number of community projects, one venture being the work undertaken with the town council to generate a vision for the future development of Chipping Sodbury. Because of the personal qualities they develop during their time in the school, students are prepared well for further and higher education and the world of work. These qualities include a commitment to their own future shown in high attendance, good learning skills and the effective development of computer skills seen across the curriculum.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

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 extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall. The impact of this improvement has yet to have full effect on students' progress but there are very positive signs. Teachers use their specialist subject knowledge effectively to plan lessons which have variety, inspire students and promote learning systematically. A key feature is the consistency of approach across the school which is having a positive impact on students' learning and the progress they make. Teachers explain things clearly and use good-quality materials and a range of approaches to make learning interesting. This includes group work when students present their findings to the whole class, helping their understanding by having to articulate their ideas. In a few lessons, teachers' questions do not deepen students' understanding sufficiently by requiring them to discuss issues in-depth, being satisfied with short responses which indicate only a shallow knowledge. Despite marked improvement, overall teaching is still not as consistently effective in English and modern foreign languages in promoting the accelerated progress evident in other subjects. Teachers' regular assessment ensures that they have a good understanding of each student's achievements; together with the recent setting arrangements, they use this information effectively to match work well to the different needs of the students in their groups. They manage time well to create challenge and take learning forward quickly, while ensuring that sufficient time is given for consolidation of ideas when this is necessary. Very good use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum so that students apply and develop their skills well, for example, of spreadsheets in food technology, publishing software in business studies and subject-specific software in music and design and technology.

The curriculum is designed well and highly effective guidance supports and challenges students to follow programmes which suit their interests and talents. Over two thirds of students in Year 10 are following courses leading to the English Baccalaureate, reflected in the International School Award, and there has been a positive response to the introduction of Latin as an after-school programme. At Key Stage 4, students are offered a wide and relevant choice of vocational subjects, the success of which is seen in steadily improving results. Performance in the specialist technology subjects, taken by all Key Stage 4 students, rose well in 2011, ensuring that the school continues to reach its specialist targets. Extra-curricular provision is varied and popular, with a high take-up.

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The pastoral team of house coordinators, key stage leaders and mentors very effectively ensure that all aspects of students' emotional, social and educational needs are covered. Very well-targeted support systems have resulted in a very wide range of internal and external support groups, for example literacy support, bully watch, and the 'breakthrough project' which successfully focuses on addressing boys' underachievement. Students also provide support for others within the school, for example befriending and mentoring students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable in The Friendship Club. Good communication with parents and carers allow rewards and concerns to be shared quickly.

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?

The headteacher's calm, principled leadership is reflected in the shared drive by the senior team and staff to bring about improvement and raise attainment. Determined and effective senior leadership are seen in the consistent implementation of clear systems across the school. A structured programme of professional development, including whole-staff training and individual coaching, is enabling staff to hone their skills within a common understanding of a 'good lesson'. As a result, the proportion of good and better teaching is increasing rapidly and any relative weaknesses are being tackled. The governing body plays a positive role as critical friend, and governors use their first-hand knowledge of the school's work effectively in formulating policy and strategic decision-making. The school's technology specialism resonates through the school. It is reflected in a number of partnerships, such as those with multinational engineering companies in the area, to provide opportunities for students which the school alone could not provide. These include the introduction of a manufacturing diploma, which is proving successful for those students undertaking the programme.

Strategies to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination are very effective in ensuring the fairness of day-to-day opportunities and students' personal development. This has been less marked in terms of academic progress but, with the rapid improvements already evident, it is still possible to judge the overall effectiveness of the school's promotion of equality of opportunity as good. Staff use the internal student tracker to successfully monitor students as well as to target and record intervention and support. As a result, new approaches or individual support are introduced quickly when any possible underperformance is identified. The school

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is a highly cohesive community, and incidents of racist or other unacceptable behaviour are rare, showing the effectiveness of the school's promotion of community cohesion. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding and recognised by the local authority as a model of good practice. For example, students are represented on a strategic safeguarding group and a school care group has been set up with feeder primary schools and the partner secondary school to identify and protect those students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

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	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students value their sixth-form experience and are good role models for younger students by undertaking responsibilities and leading whole-school activities. They effectively influence decision-making through their work on the school senate and house system. The shared curriculum and timetable with the partner school gives students an extensive range of subject choices, combinations and learning opportunities. The range of courses, including vocational programmes, meets students' needs well. Links with the partner school work effectively, with students emphasising the smooth relationships between students in the two school communities and how well the two schools work together. Students thoroughly enjoy and gain personally from a stimulating range of enrichment courses, especially through the 'electives' programme which enables students to work as volunteers in the community, for example in charity shops and primary schools, as well as running whole-school events, currently the Christmas Extravaganza to raise funds for a children's hospice.

Leadership and management are based on a comprehensive strategic vision and

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robust self-evaluation. There is a relentless focus on raising the quality of student outcomes and energetic leadership ensures that the improvements brought about in the main school are being effectively incorporated into sixth form practice. In particular, revised tutoring and mentoring systems are proving effective because of more rigorous monitoring of students' progress and targeting of support within the partnership. Consequently, progress rates are improving and, although satisfactory overall, are now good in applied A-level courses. The majority of students make satisfactory or better progress from their starting points so that the gap between school and national performance at A level is closing, bringing attainment into line with that found nationally. Teachers plan their lessons well and engage students satisfactorily in learning. However, not all of the gains made in the main school are yet evident in the sixth form so that there is less good and outstanding teaching. Generally, teaching focuses more on promoting knowledge than on developing understanding and requiring students to research and develop as autonomous learners. Students appreciate the good guidance provided for them to make appropriate choices beyond school.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who completed the Ofsted questionnaires are very supportive of the school. A number of parents and carers made very positive comments about the leadership and management of the school, including the changes introduced by the headteacher. Others wrote about the good quality of teaching, the progress that students make, the school's caring approach and the effective way in which the school deals with rare incidents of bullying. A few parents and carers perceive that the school does not help students to have a healthy lifestyle, that lessons are disrupted by a small number of students and that some teaching methods are not effective, and that the school does not take account of parental suggestions. Inspectors investigated these issues and found that the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles is a strength, shown in the large proportion of students engaging in physical activity beyond the school day. Senior leaders and the governing body regularly canvas parental views and take account of these in development planning. Teaching effectiveness ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, and no teaching was judged as inadequate during the inspection. Senior leaders are aware of and providing support for those areas which require further improvement. Students have positive attitudes to learning and only occasionally require reminders to pay attention or stop talking so that there is minimal disruption

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to learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chipping Sodbury 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 140 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 855 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	30	92	66	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	36	88	63	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	64	46	71	51	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	32	84	60	9	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	20	102	73	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	28	88	63	9	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	19	99	71	13	9	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)	37	26	89	64	10	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	26	95	68	7	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	22	92	66	12	9	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	23	88	63	12	9	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	47	34	84	60	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	34	83	59	2	1	0	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 all 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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:	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. ■ 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 pupils' 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.



9 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Chipping Sodbury School, Chipping Sodbury BS37 6EW

I am writing to let you know the outcome of the recent inspection. Thank you for the welcome you gave the inspectors and to those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to speak to us. We found that yours is a satisfactory school, both in the main school and in the sixth form. We share your views that there have been a number of improvements recently which are making the school increasingly effective.

The GCSE results have improved well and are in line with those found nationally which means that you are making overall satisfactory progress. However, because your progress is monitored regularly and you are given good feedback on the quality of your work, you have a good understanding of how to improve and many of you are making good progress, including in mathematics and science. Your progress in English is still a little slower. Your good behaviour and 'readiness to learn' make an important contribution to good learning in lessons. The care, guidance and support you receive are exceptionally good, particularly when individuals have difficulties. Most importantly, you enjoy school, are proud of all that it offers and feel exceptionally safe. This is shown in your high attendance and the way you wear the new uniform. Many students take on roles of responsibility, and they discharge their duties in a mature way which gives students an effective 'voice' about school developments.

Your headteacher, the senior team and staff are united in knowing how to make the school even better. This gives the inspection team every confidence that the school will continue to improve quickly. We have asked Mr Millington and the staff to address some areas that should help to improve your attainment and progress:

- make sure that questioning is more challenging so that you have to think more for yourselves, and expect sixth formers to work more independently
- give you more opportunities to develop your literacy skills in other subjects.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection. We wish you well in your studies and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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