



Edgbarrow School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110049
LEA Bracknell Forest LEA
Inspection number 278360
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Daniel Towl HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Sandhurst Road
School category	Community		Crowthorne
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		RG45 7HZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01344 772658
Number on roll	1147	Fax number	01344 776623
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J McNab
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr R Elsey

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 30 November 2005 - 1 December 2005	Inspection number 278360
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by Daniel Towl HMI and four additional inspectors

Description of the school

Edgbarrow School is a popular and over subscribed comprehensive school in Crowthorne. It has 1136 students including 180 in the sixth form. The number of students who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students who have statements of special educational needs is the same as most schools as the movement of students to and from other schools. Attendance is above average. The number of students from ethnic minority groups is similar to most schools but there are below average numbers of students whose first language is not English. The school has recently acquired Business and Enterprise College status and gained additional awards for example Sports Mark and Healthy Schools Gold Award. It has strong links with the community.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Inspection team agrees with the school's own assessment that its overall effectiveness is good. There are several outstanding features which contribute very effectively to student care, personal development and the good achievement of students. Students' personal development is excellent as is the care and guidance that is provided. The school works very well with outside agencies to ensure that all students including the most vulnerable have access to the support they need both for academic and personal matters. Students are happy at school and parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children. Under the exemplary leadership of the headteacher and senior team the school has established very good methods to measure and evaluate its performance. There are though, some inconsistencies in the management of departments which leads to variation in the quality of students' learning experiences. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a very good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is well established. Students are happily integrated into the sixth form and are well prepared for their futures. They praise the good relationships they have with staff and feel well supported and find the sixth form friendly. Very few drop out. The school's specialism in business and enterprise, and within it the initiatives like Young Enterprise, helpfully support students' future economic well-being. Students are developing a good understanding of civic matters through visits, community service and the work of the sixth form committee. The good teaching helps most students to gain confidence and qualifications in order to continue into further or higher education, or work. The head of the sixth form and tutors pay careful attention to monitoring and reviewing students' progress and keep clear records of students' performance. Leadership and management are good, as is the capacity to make improvements. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is aware of where further improvements can be made. Progress is good, and standards are satisfactory overall.

What the school should do to improve further

* Use the current programme of staff development and the excellent practice that already exists to ensure that all departments are equally rigorous in their self evaluation and target setting in order to lead to further improvements in students' achievements in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students achieve well and reach above average standards. Students enter the school above average and make good progress at all stages including those who enter the

sixth form. Students with learning difficulties make good and often very good progress as a result of excellent support and guidance. In 2004 standards reached at Key Stage 3 in mathematics and science put the school in the top 20% of all schools, although English was in the bottom 30%. In 2005 standards in English increased significantly. In science standards were maintained while in mathematics there was an increase in the proportion of students who gained the higher Level 7 reflecting very good and outstanding teaching. More students reach the higher levels in mathematics than in English and science. Students continue to make good progress so that by 16 years of age achievement is good and standards significantly above the national average. In 2005 the proportion of students gaining A* - C improved in most subjects between six and 19%. Most improvement was shown in drama, business, German, physical education and statistics. The school exceeded its targets in 2005 and has set itself suitably challenging targets for 2006 which reflect the aspirations of the senior leadership team. The school has been successful in reducing the differences in attainment between boys and girls. In the sixth form measures of students' achievement at A-Level put the school in the top 20% of all schools. The proportion of students gaining the higher grades A and B at A-level is broadly average. Following a short period of declining standards in the sixth form between 2003 and 2004 the standards students reached and their achievements were higher in 2005. The school took successful action to provide additional support to reduce differences in performance between departments. There were improvements in biology, chemistry, physics, design and technology, French, geography, history mathematics and sociology.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development is excellent. Attendance is above average. Students enjoy their education and say that the diverse range of activities makes school and lessons interesting. Their attitudes to school are very positive and the behaviour is good. There are very good and respectful relationships between adults and students in the school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They make the most of the opportunities to take responsibility for their own actions and respect and understand the values and beliefs of others. They learn about their own and other cultures through visits, trips and residential activities. Spiritual development is good and supported in many subjects and in assemblies such as the World Aids Day assembly. A caring ethos pervades the school which promotes racial harmony and working together as a community. On the rare occasions that there are racist incidents decisive and effective action is taken. As a result students feel safe in the school and they are safety conscious. They are given excellent opportunities to adopt healthy lifestyles by taking exercise and eating healthily. The Healthy Schools Gold Award was achieved this year and students say that their ideas on healthy lunches are being put into place. The mentoring system is very good and there is an excellent 'Listening Ears' counselling service which is run by well trained older students, and is used regularly. Students make a positive contribution to the school community through the School Council. There are effective links with local primary schools and students participate in a range of activities in the local community. Students clearly develop

very good social skills. They are polite and able to hold sensible and mature discussions. Through their lessons and other activities such as the banking initiative they successfully develop appropriate skills to contribute to their economic well-being. Careers education and guidance and supporting activities prepare students well for the acquisition of workplace skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning throughout the school, including the sixth form, are good and this confirms the school's view of itself. Senior managers have an excellent understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses are in teaching and learning. Where teaching is outstanding there are very high expectations of students who remain engaged with their activities throughout the lesson. Other strengths in good teaching include the quick rate at which learning takes place and activities that clearly meet the needs and interests of students. They respond well because they find the lessons interesting and appreciate the commitment of staff to their learning. There are times though, where lessons do not stimulate students sufficiently and this can lead to a lack of interest and boredom. Overall students enjoy their lessons but find it more interesting when they are involved in group and practical activities. Students also enjoy the chance to evaluate their own and others work because they find the ensuing conversations often help to clarify their understanding. This practice though is not embedded across the school. Senior managers have identified the need to improve assessment including students' self assessment and are already providing staff development to develop this aspect of teaching and learning. Students' workbooks are marked regularly but the quality of comments to help them to their next steps is inconsistent within and across subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The schools' curriculum is good. It is kept closely under review to ensure that it meets the needs of students. Fast pace groups in Years 8 and 9 and groups where there is additional support for literacy in years 7 and 8 are successful in improving pupils' achievements. Weaknesses from the last inspection have been adequately resolved. Improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) are now good but the school recognises that although widely used to support teaching and learning there is a little way to go to ensure that it is embedded well in all subjects. Becoming a Business and Enterprise College has had a positive impact on the curriculum especially for older students. There is now more opportunity for students to study for more commercially relevant qualifications. Many links with local businesses have been established and Year 10 pupils run a branch of a bank within the school. It is developing links with the local Education Business Partnership and other organisations to support activities such as transfer from Year 6 to Year 7. Students speak very positively about

the high number of activities and visits outside lessons which meet a range of interests and needs. Some students follow courses at local colleges and further co-operation between local schools is broadening opportunities for them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care and guidance for students is outstanding. Procedures for child protection, risk assessments and health and safety meet statutory requirements. The school has excellent relationships with outside agencies and as a result there is very good coherence in the advice and support which is offered to students. This has a positive impact on attitudes to learning and attendance which are good. Students confirm that incidents of bullying and racism are rare and behaviour is good. They are clear that these matters are taken very seriously by the headteacher and staff and that issues are dealt with quickly and fairly. As a consequence they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Students are fully aware of the processes for gaining reward and sanctions. There are very good arrangements for reporting pupils' progress to parents. The arrangements are constantly under review. Students at all levels are given clear guidance about their next steps for learning or careers. For example a presentation by staff and students about what the sixth form could offer was very well managed, imaginative and received well. Support and guidance for the most vulnerable students is outstanding. Very good links are made between the work of the learning mentor, the staff who work alongside students with learning difficulties and disabilities and other pastoral staff. This leads to coherent support to which students respond well. The support is valued by students who clearly believe it makes a difference, often exemplified by better attendance and improved confidence and attitudes. The school is very clear about its responsibilities for developing and caring for all aspects of its students. The off site health drop-in facility for older pupils provides guidance on all matters of health and in particular sexual health. The centre is well used and the nurses and other adults who run the centre link very well with other school programmes such as PHSE.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school evaluated its leadership and management as outstanding. The inspection judged this aspect of the school as good overall but confirmed that there are several outstanding features. The leadership of the headteacher and senior team is excellent. They are united in their high aspirations for the school and have clear vision. They are very good role models for all staff. There is variation in the rigour with which some departments evaluate their performance albeit there is also exemplary practice which has had significant impact on raising standards, for example in mathematics. The senior team is aware of this variation and is working hard to support and improve all departments so that students' experiences and achievements are consistent across all subjects. The self evaluation processes in the school are very effective and demonstrate that the school is aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. There is good monitoring of teaching and learning which produces reliable information that feeds

into an effective staff development programme. Senior staff are quick to act when improvement is needed. There is a clear strategy for future developments and the capacity for improvement is very good. The headteacher is extremely well respected by students, staff and the local community and under his leadership the ethos of the school as a friendly welcoming and caring environment has been maintained and developed. The school regularly seeks the views of parents, the majority of whom are very happy with what is provided for their children. The school is successful in its commitment to promoting and establishing an inclusive school in which all students are cared for and guided. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation but some parts still have shortcomings. However there is a clear strategy for improvement to buildings on a rolling programme. The school uses its funds effectively and the recent award of specialist status as a Business and Enterprise College has proved to be highly beneficial to the school. The governors have significant involvement with the school and its drive for improvements but the school does not meet its statutory requirement to provide a daily act of worship and RE in the sixth form.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The inspection team would like to thank you for your help and contributions to the inspection. It was a pleasure talking to you and finding out about the activities in which you are involved.

The inspectors judged the school to be good with several outstanding features. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is excellent. They work together well and are very keen that the school should do even better. Discussions with some of you confirmed this. Most often teaching is good and there are also some outstanding lessons which enable you to learn very well. You have a wide range of interesting activities to take part in outside lessons. The care and guidance the school offers is excellent and the links that are made with agencies outside the school are very good. This has helped to provide a safe and caring school. We are pleased that most of your parents are very happy with what the school is providing for you.

We have asked the headteacher to continue to work with all departments in order to make sure that they are all equally effective in ensuring that you make the best possible progress.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl HMI and the inspection team