

West Hatch High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136758
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	384797
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1246
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Haley
Headteacher	Frances Howarth
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2009
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe	Additional Inspector
Anne Pepper	Additional Inspector
Ahson Mohammed	Additional Inspector
Piers Ranger	Additional Inspector
Natasha Campbell	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors saw 39 lessons taught by 39 teachers and made a few shorter visits to classrooms. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and governors. The team observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documents, plans and records related to behaviour, safety and pupils' achievements. As part of the inspection, the team analysed questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 580 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average secondary school with more boys than girls on roll. The large majority, about 70%, of students are White British with the remaining 30% coming from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. A higher than usual proportion of students speak English as an additional language though most are fluent speakers of English. The school profile is changing. The numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or speaking English as an additional language has increased steadily over the last three years. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is about average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or receiving support from external agencies is above national averages with many of these students having emotional and behavioural difficulties. A below-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected for students' achievement.

West Hatch became an academy in June 2011. There have been notable staffing upheavals and changes since the last inspection, and the school has lost a number of experienced staff due, for example, to retirement or promotion elsewhere. Consequently, some middle leaders were new in post or holding the position temporarily at the time of the inspection. The school holds a number of awards such as the International Schools Award and The Green Flag Eco Schools Award.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because inconsistencies in teaching, the curriculum, and in leadership and management result in satisfactory rather than good progress. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is typically in line with national averages. Achievement is satisfactory across the school, including for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Those with statements of special educational needs often achieve well. The school is good at providing tailored programmes to support students who fall behind, although the Key Stage 3 curriculum does not always prepare all groups of students sufficiently well for Key Stage 4.
- The sixth form is satisfactory and improving. Sixth form students achieve satisfactorily in their learning and now reach broadly average standards.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is improving and there are increasing amounts of good and outstanding teaching. However, inconsistencies remain in meeting the needs of all groups of students, especially those of middle ability, and in providing suitably engaging tasks. Books are regularly marked but feedback does not always provide enough guidance for improvement.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. The rate of fixed term exclusion is low, though, and permanent exclusions are rare. Most parents and carers feel positive about their children being safe in school, and students agree. Attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leaders have a sharp focus on improving teaching and the performance of students and staff. Action taken to address these areas is having a positive impact and they are

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improving. The roles of middle leaders in these processes are less well developed. Governors are actively involved in the school's work but do not always receive a detailed enough breakdown of students' progress to hold the school to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement through improving the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that all lessons provide well planned, relevant and structured activities that actively engage students and help them to develop their skills of independent learning
 - making sure that work in lessons is consistently well matched to the needs of different groups of students, particularly those of middle ability
 - ensuring that all teachers provide clear and helpful feedback to students on how well they have achieved against their targets and what they need to do to improve further.
- Ensure the Key Stage 3 curriculum prepares all groups of students, especially those of middle ability, effectively for work at Key Stage 4 by adapting longer term curriculum plans to better meet all needs.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of all middle leaders so that they play a more proactive role in helping to improve the performance of students and the staff they manage
 - making sure that lesson observations by middle leaders and the action points from departmental reviews focus clearly on learning
 - ensuring that governors are presented with a termly breakdown of the progress of different groups of students across the school so they can better hold the school to account for performance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In most years, students begin secondary school with attainment that is in line with national averages. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is also broadly in line with national averages. Occasionally, when there is a more able group, as with the current Year 11, attainment at the end of Year 11 is higher. Current attainment in Year 11 is on track to be above average in English and mathematics and progress from students' starting points is satisfactory. The school has taken swift action to address last year's dip in standards in mathematics, which in the past has been a stronger performing subject.

Inspection evidence indicates that students make broadly satisfactory progress although learning in lessons varies. In some lessons, students make good or

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outstanding progress. However, it is often not better than satisfactory because work is either not sufficiently well matched to their learning needs, or opportunities for them to be actively engaged or to think for themselves are limited. In these instances, the pace of learning slows. Where teaching is good, pupils engage well with tasks that enable them to develop their own ideas and thinking. Most parents feel that their children are making good progress. While this is increasingly the case, the overall evidence points to satisfactory, rather than good, progress over time. Students' views are a little more mixed than those of their parents and carers.

Students make appropriate use of communication skills to support work across the curriculum. They have sound reading and writing skills though their written work is not always well presented. Students learning English as an additional language make good progress in developing their English language competency. Most students pay good attention in lessons and are keen to do well. When asked to work in pairs or groups, they respond well and demonstrate effective skills in communicating ideas and views. This was well demonstrated in a Year 7 lesson where pupils were articulate and thoughtful when sharing their responses to a homeless character in a book they are studying.

Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In some lessons, teaching assistants help them to think through their work carefully so that they understand new ideas well. On other occasions, however, they are given a little too much help so their progress is more limited. Students who have a statement of special educational needs often make good progress because their needs are well identified and support is effectively tailored to meet them.

The school is improving the progress of middle attaining students, largely boys, who in the past have made more limited progress. A good range of intervention strategies is helping to ensure that this group makes satisfactory progress. However, there is some over-reliance, especially in Key Stage 4, on additional input to secure sufficient progress for this group. This is because the curriculum and teaching lower down the school have not fully addressed their particular learning needs. Consequently, some join Key Stage 4 with gaps in their prior knowledge and skills.

Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress. Standards are broadly average but are rising, with increasing proportions of students attaining A* to B grades. Achievement is not yet good because variations across A and AS level subjects have not been fully smoothed out.

Quality of teaching

While most teaching is satisfactory or better, and some is outstanding, there is also some inadequate teaching. Most parents feel that their children are taught well. Students are more mixed in their views, which better reflects the inspection findings that teaching is not yet consistently good and is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the sixth form is better than in Key Stages 3 and 4 and none is inadequate. However, it, too, is not yet consistently good or better.

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Teachers share learning objectives with students so they know what they are expected to learn. Relationships are generally good and most students cooperate well with teachers' requests. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and where teaching is good or better, they use this effectively to ask probing questions and to devise relevant and interesting activities. These actively engage students and help them to understand key ideas. In many lessons, though, teachers spend too much time explaining and do not give students enough opportunities to work on their own or in groups. Consequently, students do not develop their ability to think for themselves and their learning slows. At times, work is not matched to the needs of different groups of students in the class, so that it is too hard or easy for some. Occasionally, more able students are not stretched enough, although teaching in higher ability groups tends to be good. Small groups to support learning in English provide tasks and materials that are well tailored to the needs of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. The best marking provides good feedback to students on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across the school and many students are unclear about how well they are doing or their next steps in learning.

Students have good opportunities to develop their social skills and skills of collaboration where teaching is good. In these lessons, they have time to reflect on their learning and to consider life's more profound questions.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' typical behaviour is satisfactory, and this is reflected in questionnaire responses from parents and carers, staff and students. Behaviour around the school is orderly and students are polite and courteous. In lessons, students usually do as asked by their teachers, but in many lessons, they are somewhat passive and not always enthusiastic about learning. The school's behaviour management procedures are clear but are not always consistently applied and minor, low-level issues sometimes occur. Senior leaders and pastoral staff are visible around the school, including during lesson times, and proactively deal with incidents so that they do not escalate. Attendance is rising and is now above average. Fixed-term exclusion rates are low when compared with schools nationally and few students are excluded more than once. This reflects the positive changes secured in the behaviour of more challenging students and the school's inclusive and positive approach. Students are very appreciative of the support they receive from staff. Sixth formers are really positive ambassadors for the school.

The large majority of parents and carers feel their children are safe, and students and staff agree. Students understand how to keep themselves safe and that prejudiced behaviour, be it racism or homophobic, is unacceptable. Consequently, bullying and harassment are infrequent, and parents and carers largely agree that any such incidents are dealt with effectively.

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Leadership and management

The headteacher provides a clear direction for continual improvement and development and is supported well by her deputies and governors. The senior leadership team takes a strong lead in monitoring and improving performance, both of staff and students. Systems to track progress are well established and senior leaders work actively with middle leaders to identify and address the needs of individuals or groups who are at risk of underperforming. Senior staff lead regular subject reviews, although the action points from these do not always focus enough on learning. They also provide useful coaching for middle leaders through joint lesson observations and subject reviews. However, while improving, the role of middle leaders in proactively raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning is not consistently well developed. For example, there is more focus on teaching than learning when middle leaders undertake lesson observations on their own. Nonetheless, the school's leaders have secured key improvements such as in mathematics where gaps in achievement between different groups are narrowing, and in attendance. They have dealt effectively with some instances of weaker leadership and teaching, demonstrating they have the capacity to improve. Leadership of the sixth form is energetic and is making a positive impact on improving standards.

The governing body provides good financial expertise and ensures that safeguarding requirements are met. Members ask challenging questions but are not provided with a detailed enough breakdown of the progress of different groups of students across the school. This limits the extent to which they can hold the school to account for its performance.

Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. The school's main curriculum is well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits, including to other countries. Subjects such as art and music make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the curriculum and teaching, especially in Key Stage 3, are not always sharply enough tailored to meet the needs of all groups, although a variety of additional tailored programmes and interventions ensure that no group underachieves. New systems for behaviour management and low exclusions mean that students with behavioural needs remain in lessons most of the time. Students agree that any discrimination is robustly tackled.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



27 April 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of West Hatch High School, Chigwell, IG7 5BT

Thank you for giving us such a friendly welcome when we visited your school recently and for sharing your views with us. We really enjoyed talking to you and observing you in your lessons. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and helping you to make satisfactory progress in your learning. You have many opportunities to join in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips and visits, including abroad. You enjoy school and feel safe there.

Staff look after you well and you appreciate the help they give you. One of the positive features of the school is the way in which support is provided for students who fall behind. Those of you with a statement of special educational needs are particularly well supported and make good progress as a result. We also noticed the vibrant and creative work in art around the school, and in music.

Your headteacher is working hard with other leaders, staff and governors to improve the school, and together they are making a positive difference. We have asked them to focus especially on:

- improving teaching so that the work you are given is well put together, makes you think for yourselves and engages you actively so that you and your teachers make the best use of the learning time in lessons
- making sure that you are given useful guidance on how to make your work better
- helping all subject leaders to check how well their subject areas are helping you to progress, and to make sure that subject reviews focus enough on how to make your learning better.

To help your school improve, continue to do your best work at all times and keep up your good attendance. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe
Lead inspector

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