

Court Moor School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116412
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326387
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	James Sage HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Nick Veck
Headteacher	Mrs Beverley Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 April 2006
School address	Spring Woods Fleet GU52 7RY
Telephone number	01252 615065
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 40 lessons, and held meetings with governors, teachers and other school staff, and students. Inspectors also made the most of any opportunities to have informal discussions with students and to look at their work. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation including policies, student tracking data, school attendance data and records of meetings. Inspectors also took account of the views of parents expressed in 187 questionnaires.

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

- how is improvement in achievement matched to improvement in provision, particularly in teaching and learning, and in assessment
- how do students' achievements compare across all curriculum areas and groups of students, and how are any variations linked to the quality of the provision and/or leadership and management
- how good are students' achievements in Key Stage 3
- what is the impact of the school's specialist science status on the outcomes for students?

Information about the school

The proportion of students at Court Moor School who are eligible for free school meals is well below national average. Most students are from a White background. The proportions of students from a minority ethnic background, and who do not speak English as a first language, are both well below national averages. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. Court Moor has been a specialist science school since 2004.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

A key strength of the school is the extent to which it knows and takes care of each individual student. The school's philosophy of 'caring to achieve' permeates all that it does. This is reflected in outstanding outcomes for students. Attainment has been sustained at a high level for several years. There has been steady and significant improvement in students' achievement over the previous three years as a result of improvements in the quality of provision. This trend has been sustained for the current cohort of students.

Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved and is now exemplary. This directly contributes to improved levels of achievement. Given the crowded nature of the school, the size of many classrooms and limited space for movement around the school, this is a significant achievement. Students show very high levels of commitment to the school. They frequently take the initiative in planning and managing activities that have direct benefit for other students and the wider community. To highlight just two examples of many: the student council has been influential in moving the school to becoming an eco-school; the manner in which a group of students actively seeks out others who may find social interaction during school breaks difficult and provides them with a games club is exceptional. Student participation in a wide range of activities, including those that help them to maintain high levels of physical and emotional well-being, are outstanding.

The proportion of outstanding teaching has increased but with a small minority of teaching remains satisfactory. Satisfactory lessons are characterised by weaknesses in the involvement of all students, in feedback to students on their current work and by lack of challenge for the most able students. Students are enthusiastic about their learning and make at least good progress in the large majority of lessons. The improvements in teaching and learning are a result of carefully targeted professional development, collaboration between teachers, and increased use of technology to develop different approaches to teaching. The school has extremely effective procedures for tracking and monitoring students' progress and setting targets; students are fully aware of their targets. The tracking procedures are supported extremely well by very sensitively managed and successful interventions to support those students falling behind. One example of this success is the number of previously persistent absentees who now attend school and achieve well. The school is also careful to ensure that the curriculum meets well the needs of individuals. Another outcome of the monitoring is a personalised curriculum for some students,

particularly in Key Stage 4. Where a student has fallen behind or where, for example, a course at the local college turns out to be inappropriate, students have independent study time that is supervised, or not, according to need. These students use this time in an extremely mature manner to improve their achievements.

The school has used its science specialist status to broaden students' experiences in science, for example by offering courses in areas such as astronomy, and through links with nearby universities and science-based industries. The specialist status has also been used to establish links and promote science-based activity across the curriculum. Examples include health-related fitness in physical education, the use of microscopes as an inspiration for students' work in art and design, and links with history to support enquiry-based approaches to learning. Additional equipment, particularly in information and communication technology, is used widely across the school. Teaching approaches in mathematics and improvements in students' achievements can be, in part, attributed to the effective use of this equipment.

The senior leadership team is very strong and the school has outstanding capacity for both maintaining high attainment and for sustained improvement where required. This is demonstrated clearly through improvements in students' achievements and behaviour, and in the quality of the provision. To give a specific example, in the previous inspection report, the school was advised to improve literacy and numeracy in all subjects. In many lessons, teachers are now fully aware that both can be barriers to learning in the subject and now plan work accordingly to develop students' skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce further the proportion of teaching that is satisfactory through more explicit and focused use of the outstanding teaching in the school to model best practice. In particular, to improve:
 - the engagement of students through directed questioning and targeted learning activities
 - the feedback to students on their current work
 - the level of challenge for the most able students.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

1

Students are enthusiastic and well-motivated learners. In a very high proportion of the lessons observed they make at least good progress. Their behaviour in lessons is outstanding. They take a full part in the learning opportunities provided, work very well together, support each other sensitively and show great maturity in working independently from Year 7 onwards.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is high. Attainment in both English and mathematics is above the national average. Attainment in science is also above the

national average with some aspects significantly above. Students' progress has improved substantially over the last three years and students' achievement is now good. In English and mathematics achievement is outstanding. There are no differences between the achievement of different groups of students. The school's data show conclusively that attainment has improved steadily in Key Stage 3 and is now at least good. A small group of students achieved less well due to poor attendance. The school has addressed this extremely effectively, leading to much improved attendance and, for those that attend, very good progress.

Students enjoy coming to school and make outstanding contributions to the school and wider community. They have an excellent understanding of safe behaviour and apply this very well in lessons and around the school. Students also have an excellent understanding of how to maintain good health and they fully exploit the many opportunities provided by the school to do this. The school provides a very wide range of opportunities enabling students to have outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One excellent example, selected from many, is the involvement of almost all students, and staff, in an activity arranged as part of Holocaust Memorial Day to 'stand up to hatred'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

Teaching is good overall. In around one third of lessons teaching is outstanding; this is an improvement and has contributed to raising students' achievements. In about one quarter it is satisfactory. It is this latter proportion that prevents teaching overall from being outstanding. The outstanding teaching is characterised by innovative and stimulating approaches leading to extremely high levels of enjoyment for students. It always fully engages and challenges all students and leads to outstanding progress. In these lessons, students receive rapid and detailed feedback on their learning and

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

are clear about the next steps they need to take. Very careful attention is given to taking the students through steps in learning in a well-managed manner appropriate to their individual needs, but always with a degree of challenge. Satisfactory teaching is characterised by the lack of involvement of some students, insufficient challenge, and weaknesses in the quality of feedback to students.

The school has extremely systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring the progress of all students and these have directly contributed to improvements in students' achievement. This is against targets set using extensive analysis of data and other information about students' performance. A particular strength is the very sensitive balance between the use of academic data and full awareness of all aspects of students' personal circumstances and character. This enables the school to put in place a mentoring system that is very finely tuned to individual needs. All students, and their parents or carers, are fully aware of their targets through termly reporting and the use of these targets by subject teachers. The very large majority take to heart the schools 'meet and beat' approach to targets. There is a good balance of frequent 'progress and target' reporting and opportunities for subject-based consultation. While it must be recognised that a small group of parents and carers would prefer more subject-based consultation, there is clear evidence that the academic monitoring and mentoring system has led to significant improvements in students' achievements.

The school's curriculum is outstanding in its attention to providing all students with opportunities that are appropriate to their needs. The formal curriculum is supported by a very wide range of very well attended and stimulating enrichment and out-of-school activities. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is particularly well customised to meet the needs of those students not best served by the more 'traditional' curriculum or who have particular requirements. The school, despite being 11–16, is taking an impressive lead in the development of 14–19 opportunities in the area. It already provides a good range of applied courses in the school and vocational courses at a partner post-16 college. The excellent match of curriculum to needs and aspirations contributes to the high motivation of students.

In addition to the outstanding academic monitoring and support, the school is exceptional in its attention to, and support for, individual students. Very careful attention is given to the transition from Key Stage 2. Students have total confidence in the school, the advice it provides and the support they receive. The school is proactive in its work with families and with a range of agencies. It sets very high standards for the support it expects from these agencies and is not afraid to be critical if they fail to provide this standard for their students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is outstanding. They are supported very well by others in the senior leadership team. This team has a broad range of skills and attributes that blend well to ensure strong leadership and management across all aspects of the school. This team has a very thorough and detailed understanding of what is working well in the school. They are clear about what needs further development, what needs to be embedded more widely and those aspects that require improvement. This is indicated well in the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. This understanding is used to set clear and challenging targets that drive the improvement achieved by the school. The governing body provides excellent support and additional challenge to the headteacher and senior leadership team; it is very effective in holding them to account.

The school communicates well with students and with parents and carers; all are involved extensively in decision-making. The school is fully aware that improvements need to be securely rooted in teaching and learning. Substantial attention is given to the professional development of teaching and learning support staff. Much is based on a well-developed collaborative action research model. This has largely been very effective. However, the approach lacks an explicit use of the outstanding teachers in the school to model best practice for others.

The school's attention to the needs of all students means that the achievement of equality is outstanding. The improvements made across the school have both increased achievement for all groups, and also reduced gaps in achievement where these existed. Vulnerable students achieve at least as well as others. The school is also outstanding in its attention to safeguarding procedures. It is rigorous in monitoring the effectiveness of these, and actively involves students, parents and carers, and other agencies in this.

The school has a thorough and detailed understanding of its own community and has links with schools in areas with higher levels of social deprivation and internationally. Many of the actions taken by the school implicitly promote community cohesion, in addition to explicit actions taken and the work of the community director. A good example is the school's and students' involvement in a rights, respect and responsibility initiative. While the school has procedures in place to monitor developments in promoting community cohesion, it is too early to determine the impact.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	1
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their	1

involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the completed parental questionnaires were positive about all aspects of the school, with many very positive. Parents are particularly positive about students' safety and behaviour, and about students' progress and the way that the school keeps parents and carers informed about this. Only around 6% of questionnaires raised any concerns. A very small number of points were raised about the shortness of school breaks and the possible implications for eating healthily. A very small number of parents and carers would prefer more subject-based consultations with teachers.

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. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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.



26 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Court Moor School, Fleet, GU52 7RY

I would like to thank you all for your extremely mature manner when talking with inspectors in lessons, around the school and in the meetings we arranged. I am writing to tell you that as a result of our inspection we have judged your school to be outstanding. You had a major part to play in helping us to reach that judgement. All inspectors were extremely impressed by your openness, willingness to discuss your school, and your attitudes and behaviour, which we think are exemplary.

In our view, a key strength of the school is the extent to which it knows and takes care of each of you. The school's philosophy of 'caring to achieve' permeates all that it does. You achieve well and your school's GCSE results are well above the national average. This is a result of largely good or better teaching – with about one third of lessons outstanding – and very careful monitoring of your progress, as well as your own efforts and hard work. We were pleased that your views about teaching were very much in line with our own. The mentoring system the school has put in place is very effective in ensuring that very few of you fall behind. If you do, the teachers are very sensitive in providing support to help you to catch up. A number of you gave us very good examples of this. The school also works hard to make sure that you have a curriculum that meets your needs, particularly in Key Stage 4; you told us that this works well for most of you. We also judged that the senior leadership of the school is very strong, constantly striving to make things even better for you, and taking very careful account of your views and opinions.

The school is also aware of the need to develop you in other ways. It takes great care to make sure that you are safe and that you look after your physical and emotional health and well-being. It provides many opportunities for you to take part in activities outside of the main curriculum, both within the school and the wider community, and you certainly make the most of these. We were also extremely impressed by the ways in which you take the lead in so many aspects of the school life, but particularly in the ways you look out for each other.

We judged that a small proportion of lessons is satisfactory and we have asked the school to reduce this so that even more of your lessons are good or better.

Yours faithfully

James Sage
Her Majesty's Inspector

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