



Claydon High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124846
LEA SUFFOLK LEA
Inspection number 281822
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. John Williams LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Church Lane
School category	Community		IP6 OEG
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01473 836110
Number on roll	850	Fax number	01473 836117
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Paul Eustace
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Elizabeth Soule

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Claydon High School serves a mainly rural community in Suffolk. It has an increasing proportion of students from the urban outskirts of Ipswich. There are 850 students on roll, of which some 200 are in a sixth form that is shared with another secondary school, Thurleston. The 11-16 part of the school is small by national averages. Nearly all students speak English as a first language. Below average numbers have free school meals or have a statement of special educational needs. The school has good facilities, for example, lifts, to provide access for children with disabilities. The attainment of the cohort of students coming from primary schools is broadly in line with or a little above that found nationally; it fluctuates on a yearly basis. The school is a specialist humanities college.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Claydon High School provides good value for money. Apart from mathematics, standards have risen since the last inspection. Different groups of students all make good progress with their learning; below average ability students do particularly well in their GCSEs. A strength of the school is the care, support and guidance offered to students and the attention paid to their personal development. The school's inclusion policy is being implemented successfully. Much of the teaching is good. In the vast majority of lessons students take a keen interest in their learning, often questioning teachers well so as to be sure everyone understands. Students' behaviour is normally good and the vast majority enjoy coming to school. However, a minority occasionally disrupts lessons in mathematics and science, and parents are concerned about this. Teachers need to consistently apply the school's behaviour management policy. The focus on adopting a healthy lifestyle is now established and students are prepared very well for their future economic well-being. As yet the school has been slow to take account of students' views. The school council, for example, does not meet regularly and does not address important issues. The school is led well by an experienced headteacher, leadership group and capable heads of department. Recruitment to some subjects such as mathematics is a problem and this has impacted on the quality of teaching. Management knows where any pockets of weakness lie and efforts continue to eradicate these. Parents and carers are encouraged to take an interest in their children's learning and the majority of them are positive about what the school does for their child whilst recognising the weaknesses. There are good links with external agencies and the local community to support students and their families. The school knows exactly where its strengths and areas for development lie. It demonstrates that it has the capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the sixth form provision is satisfactory. It is jointly managed by two schools, offering an integrated programme. The breadth of the curriculum does not yet fully meet the needs of the changing student population, but the school has identified this as an area to be developed and is making progress. Students enjoy their studies and appreciate the informal and supportive ethos of the sixth form. Good teaching supports good learning, with clear guidance given on study skills. A variety of opportunities are provided for students to take responsibility for their own personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take note of the voice of the student in the school.
- Consistently apply behaviour management policies and reduce the number of exclusions.
- Widen the curriculum provision for 14-19 year olds.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Year 7 students' attainment is in line with or a little above national averages when they begin; this fluctuates year on year. They make very good progress and by the end of Year 9 standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 11 progress in English and science is good; progress in mathematics is sound but not as good. The percentage of students achieving five grades A*-C or A*-G is well above the national average and the GCSE results of subjects identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection are much improved and are now good. Standards in the sixth form are satisfactory overall and are improving. In psychology and history they are very good. Different groups of students all make good progress in their learning. Challenging targets are mostly met, including those for specialist status. Students know the levels to which they are aspiring; some know what they have to do to achieve their targets. Students question very well in lessons in order to understand and most are independent yet cooperative learners.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students achieve well and most enjoy school, especially when lessons are interesting and challenging. They develop good skills for their future economic well-being, benefit from a good programme of work experience, and are taught about the need to develop healthy lifestyles. They have above average key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Students feel safe; most instances of bullying are dealt with promptly. They make a satisfactory contribution to the community by acting as mentors and raising funds for charities, but there are unsatisfactory arrangements for consulting them and involving them in the work of the school, for example through the school council. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know right from wrong, and many apply this understanding at school. They are self-confident and considerate, and have good learning skills. Sixth formers have good attitudes to study. All students are helped to reflect on spiritual matters in assemblies and subjects such as English, and a good range of subjects and special study days contribute to their cultural development. Students' rates of attendance are above average and the overall quality of their behaviour is satisfactory. In many lessons, behaviour is good or very good. However, a significant number of parents express concerns about behaviour and about 10% of students had fixed-term exclusions last year. The school's rewards and sanctions are not implemented consistently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors confirm the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good. Students are prepared to learn and quickly acquire literacy and research skills which help them to progress. Teachers make good use of their specialist knowledge to plan a good variety of interesting activities. Students enjoy lessons and most understand the level at which they are working and what they need to do to improve, but marking of students' work varies and often does not indicate the level at which they are working. The school focus on assessment for learning is improving practice, with very good arrangements in, for example, art, science and humanities. Relationships and the climate for learning are generally good, but weaknesses in managing instances of poor behaviour interrupt progress in mathematics and occasionally in science. Students' use of ICT to assist their learning is developing well, often as a result of specialist college status. Sixth formers respond well to the more adult learning style and individual guidance provided, and regard the sixth form teaching as good. Their knowledge and understanding develop well on the whole, as teachers work to their specialist strengths.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory, with some strengths. It is good in Key Stage 3, where all of the required subjects are provided. Transition arrangements with local primary schools are very good and help students settle in well to secondary study. In Key Stage 4, students have a good choice of traditional GCSE subjects together with a few alternatives. The recent introduction of GCSE leisure and tourism and health and social care and a joint project with other local schools and colleges are increasing choice, particularly for students who want to see the applications of their learning. Personal and social education and citizenship are satisfactory and cover required elements of health and careers education. Religious education and ICT are taught separately so that students are given good opportunity to take half GCSEs in both. The sixth form curriculum is satisfactory. A good choice of AS/A2 level courses is provided in partnership with another school, but this does not always provide suitable progression for all the Year 11 students. Personal and social education is satisfactory and includes both careers and health education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care and guidance provided for students is good. Good procedures for child protection are in place and the required health and safety checks are carried out. The school provides effective support for vulnerable students. Form tutors know their students well, especially in the sixth form. Students adopt healthy lifestyles to a satisfactory extent; although some choose the healthy food options the school provides,

many do not. In Years 7 to 11 there is good provision for physical education lessons and competitive sports fixtures. In several subjects, students understand how to improve their work but in a minority this understanding is weaker. Recently, the school appointed a progress manager for Year 7 and a student manager for Years 9 and 10. Their work is starting to improve students' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well by the headteacher, supported by an experienced leadership group and effective heads of department. They have successfully focused on improving standards, but despite efforts have had difficulty recruiting mathematics teachers to support this aim. All staff in the school have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development and are addressing them. The part governors play in this is impressive; they have an in-depth knowledge of the issues the school faces. Communication between sections of the school community is good; for example, governors meet parents where there is any concern raised. Performance management is established well. A rolling programme of lesson observation and departmental monitoring effectively informs targets for the coming years. The allocation of financial resources is based upon sound principles. The school's self-evaluation document is good and shared with staff. It provides an accurate and honest assessment of the school's successes and areas for development. Progress has been good against some challenging targets and the targets for the specialist school status have mostly been met. The school is not complacent about what needs to be further achieved and there is commitment to ongoing development. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
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?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

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

Mrs Cook, Mr Milton, Dr Hilton and I enjoyed meeting you all when we visited your school. Thank you for welcoming us and for giving up your time to speak to us. It is clear that many of you are working hard and are determined to do well. The examination results are good and show that you make good progress, especially with your English and science, but less so in mathematics. Claydon High School is a good school where Mrs Soule and the teachers, teaching assistants and other adults who work there try to take good care of you. Most of you seem to enjoy coming to school. It is good to see some taking up the 'healthy options' food and keeping fit. We like the way you work with each other and the teachers, and particularly the way you take a real interest in what you are doing and ask questions so as to make sure you understand. You conduct yourself well most of the time, but in a few lessons, particularly in maths, the behaviour of some is affecting how others learn. We would like to see this improved so that you are all able to achieve as well as you can. We have asked the school to look at ways to help you become more involved in making decisions about the school, particularly through the school council, so that your say is listened to and acted upon. We also feel that you could be offered a wider range of things to study in the sixth form. The school has started to do this already. We hope you will continue to work hard and do well at Claydon High School.