



# Ash Manor School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 125271  
**Local Authority** Surrey  
**Inspection number** 293244  
**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Paul Armitage HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Manor Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Ash
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		Aldershot GU12 6QH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 353900
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1026	<b>Fax number</b>	01252 353908
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs L Velcic
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Linnell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 May 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	21–22 February 2007	293244

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Ash Manor is a popular, oversubscribed comprehensive school. The majority of students are White British with a small number of others coming from a wide range of ethnic groups, some of whom have English as an additional language. Students' standards when they begin school vary year-on-year between average and just below average. Students come from a variety of home backgrounds and, as well as a higher than average proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, the school admits a good number of significantly able children. The school has specialist status in technology.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Ash Manor provides a satisfactory education overall but with some good and even outstanding features. It provides an orderly, pleasant environment in which to learn. The buildings are in very good condition and there are excellent resources. It has excellent community links. It has won much public recognition, most recently the renewal of its Healthy Schools Award. Some aspects of care and support for students are outstanding and students' personal development is good. The school is well respected in the community and is oversubscribed. Parents and carers, in their questionnaire responses to inspectors are very positive about the school. A few made criticisms but these were not shared by others. There are committed staff at all levels who want the students to do well and there are many valuable extra-curricular activities.

Given this context, it is difficult to understand why students are not doing better academically. Standards in Key Stage 3 are average but in Key Stage 4, GCSE results have been consistently below average in recent years and fell in 2006. However, more positively, comparing their ability on starting at Ash Manor and their results in both Key Stages 3 and 4, students actually make satisfactory progress. As a result, it is possible to say that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The senior management team has recently been strengthened. There is now a clear view from staff and governors that past performance has not been good enough and they have a strong commitment to improve. They recognise the need for students to be challenged and inspired to do better. They have produced a good self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and have plausible development strategies. Some of the improvements are already in place and others, such as the use of information on how well students are doing to improve teaching are being piloted. They are already having a positive impact. Senior staff have recognised that students do not take enough responsibility for their own learning and have already introduced innovations based on some of the best teaching that exists in parts of the school. The capacity for the school to improve is now good.

The school became a specialist technology college in September 2005 which has led to significant developments including increased resources for the teaching of technology and good links with the community including feeder primary schools. This latter includes helping with the Year 6 curriculum and providing technical support for information and communication technology (ICT). Students also benefit directly from undertaking project work for external organisations and there are useful sponsorships.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Inspire students more to achieve academically and raise both teachers' and students' expectations of what can be achieved.
- Use assessment more effectively to inform teachers' teaching and students' learning.
- Encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In Key Stage 3, standards in recent years have been average with relatively small variation between subjects. The progress made by students has been satisfactory although it has been more successful in some subjects than others. Students' progress in mathematics and science has improved over the last two years but progress in English dipped significantly last year. As a result, the school has taken effective action to change practice in the teaching of reading which was the cause of the decline.

In Key Stage 4, standards over the past few years have been consistently below average and examination results in 2006 were lower than 2005. However, taking account of the ability of the 2006 students when they began school, their progress was satisfactory and an improvement on 2004 and 2005.

Analysis of results has been used well to identify and put in place changes to improve students' performance. Current evidence is that these actions are having an effect. Nevertheless, the school correctly recognises that there is an urgent need to raise standards and achievement further in both key stages.

The standards attained and the progress made by different groups of students are satisfactory; for example, there is little difference between the performance of girls and boys. Pupils who are gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development is good. Their spiritual development is good. As they grow older, they become increasingly confident and willing to take chances and explore the opportunities they are offered. They have an increasing understanding of issues such as race, age and sex discrimination and concepts such as love and the nature of relationships. Students' moral development is good. They are developing clear moral values and strong points of view on current issues. Students' social development is good. For the most part they work well together although they report that the misbehaviour of a small minority in a few lessons is distracting. Students have a good knowledge of local culture and benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities, many of which have a strong cultural dimension but their knowledge and understanding of the range of cultures in the United Kingdom needs improving. Students' development of workplace and other skills is satisfactory, linked predominantly to the satisfactory progress that they make in their lessons.

Aided by the school's personal, social and health education programme as well as other encouragements, students are well aware of how to stay healthy and many clearly follow this guidance. They feel safe; for instance, in circle time, they are not afraid to express quite personal feelings and do not fear that others will laugh at them. Students interviewed were adamant that there is no evident racism and that bullying, when it occurs, is dealt with properly by staff.

Attendance is below average though this is due to the high level of authorised absence for health and similar reasons. Students make a positive contribution to the community. There are many examples; one is the significant fundraising to support Great Ormond Street Hospital. The school council and prefect systems work well but the school recognises that both could be involved even more in management and strategic development.

Overall, students enjoy school. A selection of students from different year groups was interviewed by inspectors. When asked at the end of discussions how they rated the school out of ten, the almost universal view was between eight and nine.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the quality of lessons varies widely. Some are excellent; others less so. The school's managers are aware of the variation. They are monitoring lessons carefully and have introduced measures to help less inspirational teachers to improve. This is already having a positive impact.

In the better lessons, teachers inspire and challenge students with interesting topics, interesting material, skilful questioning and making students ask questions and find answers for themselves. They encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. The work is very well matched to students' needs and the relevance of what is being taught is very clear to them. Classroom management is also a strength. As a result, the pace is fast and students make good progress. In weaker lessons, many of these features are absent.

The school has made improving the use of examinations, test and other results a prime focus for improving teaching and learning. It has correctly identified that students have not been sufficiently equipped to know how to do better and take more responsibility for their own learning. The passion for learning has not been sufficiently evident and too many have not made the progress of which they are capable. As a result, the school is now piloting improved arrangements in some departments and these are having a positive effect on both teaching and learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

In Key Stage 3, the curriculum covers the National Curriculum and religious education. A good feature is the way that the curriculum in some subjects is being reviewed to make the content more relevant to helping students understand the world in which they live. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is flexible and relevant. In addition to more academic courses, it gives students a good range of vocational options.

The school regards students' personal development as very important and has introduced an innovative social and cultural studies course which also covers citizenship.

The course is new and has the potential to meet the weakness in students' cultural development reported earlier in this report. In response to pupils' requests, the school has also introduced a very wide range of sporting activities which helps them lead healthy life styles.

Students enjoy good opportunities for enhancing their learning and life experiences through curriculum-related day visits and visitors. Recent residential visits during school holidays have included skiing and a visit to China. Current school exchanges are to Germany and Belgium. There is a good range of after-school clubs. Staff give generously of their time to provide support for learning beyond the school day.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory and has some good and outstanding features. Under the overall control of the Learning Department, the advice, guidance and support offered to identified groups of vulnerable students is outstanding. This is very clear in the support given to a group of Year 11 students to help them with their GCSEs. The pioneering work undertaken by the school in developing links with community services and with students' families is also impressive. Another good example of the way the school cares for students is its role in setting up the West Surrey Foundation with local primary schools to ensure that students move easily from primary to secondary education. Students are also very enthusiastic about the help they receive with careers education. Care is also highly evident in the good quality, well-presented food available in dining areas and in the high quality maintenance by caretaking staff. The school has the correct system in place to security-check all staff.

Despite this positive picture, the school has correctly identified areas where improvement is needed. It recognises the need to improve the way that staff and students use data on performance more effectively to improve teaching and learning. In addition, more should be done to link the many positive initiatives from the Learning Department to actual classroom practice - for example, the initiatives on gifted and talented students and improving students' understanding of feelings and emotions.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The new senior leadership team, which came together in 2005, is working well. Its ability to evaluate the school is good and it fully acknowledges strengths and weaknesses. It has introduced a range of strategies to raise standards and its plans for further improvement are sound. Current evidence of the effectiveness of these actions shows the school has good capacity to improve although the fact that they are relatively recent means that as yet, they have had only limited impact on test and examination results.

Subject leaders and senior managers are fully involved in monitoring and analysing standards of work and of teaching and their judgements are accurate. Regular departmental reviews are carried out and include the identification of professional development needs. Until recently, the information this yields has not been used rigorously enough to ensure an improvement in standards. Heads of House have been appointed to replace the previous heads of year. They provide very good pastoral support. Their developing role in monitoring the performance of students and departments to set targets and generally improve teaching and learning has the potential to be good.

Governors are good and well led. They provide both support and challenge to the school and bring a range of appropriate expertise to the governing body. They are aware of both strengths and weaknesses and have a strong commitment to raising standards and improving students' progress which they acknowledge are too low. Finances are well managed in the school ensuring effective budget planning and control.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we recently inspected your school. We met many of you and we are very grateful for the help that you gave us. As I explained, your views were very important to us. Your school exists for you and it is very important that you are satisfied with your education.

We were very impressed with a lot of what you do. In particular, the way in which you are developing as people. For example, it is very good to see how well you participate in the school council and as prefects and how you respect the views of everybody in class.

So you see that we think that, in many ways, your school is a very good place. However, we have to tell you that if you look at your school's results over the past few years in Year 9 and Year 11, then they are not as good as both we and your teachers think they should be. You make satisfactory progress but we think you should be doing much better. Your headteacher and governors are now introducing improvements and we can already see that these are working. But you also must help. You must decide that you really want to learn and take on more responsibility for your learning, asking your school to help you and using its excellent resources to the maximum.

In our report which you can see in full on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) we have given your school three key issues to address. They are about inspiring you to do better, using your examination, test and other results to match the teaching better to your needs, and encouraging you to take more responsibility for your own learning.

Once again, many thanks for your help and my very best wishes to you and your school for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Armitage

Her Majesty's Inspector