

Adeyfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117512
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312641
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	763
6th form	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pamela Sanvoisin
Headteacher	Mr Peter Hepburn
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
School address	Longlands Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 4DE
Telephone number	01442 406020
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The majority of students come from White British backgrounds. A small percentage of students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is just above that usually found. The proportion of students identified with learning difficulties is above average but the percentage with a statement of educational need is below. The school has 'Business and Enterprise' status. It has also achieved the International Schools Award, Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark and Sportsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Adeyfield is a good school. Parents overwhelmingly support the school in its work and say they are 'pleased with the way the school is run.' Students' personal and academic development is good because staff have a shared vision for the future of the school and work very well as a team to ensure its continued success. The headteacher has established an ethos where success is celebrated and the needs of individual students are paramount. This has resulted in rising standards at both Year 9 and Year 11 because students want to succeed and have positive attitudes to school and to learning. Achievement is particularly good for the least able although some of the most able are insufficiently challenged to make the best progress. Leaders have identified this trend and are taking steps to rectify it. However, overall achievement is good and standards are average. Because students are confident and happy in school attendance is improving and is close to average. They like school because staff present them with learning activities that they enjoy and which interest them. The school makes excellent use of links with other organisations to support students, particularly those who have had difficulties settling elsewhere. As a result, exclusions are low and behaviour is good.

Effective teaching leads to well ordered lessons where students settle quickly to work and concentrate on the task in hand. This results in a good pace to the learning with little time lost establishing order. The effective relationships teachers establish with their students helps to build confidence so that they are not afraid to try something new. Lesson planning is thorough, with varied activities that enable most students to make good progress in their learning. However, the needs of more able students are not always sufficiently identified and met to help them reach the higher levels in national tests at Year 9 and 11. Not all teachers are using data sufficiently well to improve students' achievement. This is a current school priority.

The school's success is no accident. It arises from the highly effective leadership of the headteacher and governors. They have established a very able leadership team committed to school improvement. They know the school very well because they have effective systems in place to check how well it is performing. This ensures that staff and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what it needs to improve. Leadership and management overall is good because the clarity of vision of the headteacher and senior staff has ensured that the school makes very effective use of its specialist status in business and enterprise to drive up standards throughout the school. They are rising at both Key Stage 3 and 4, though progress has been better at Key Stage 4 than among younger students recently. The school has identified this trend and put strategies in place to address it successfully.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The increasingly popular sixth form provides well for its students. They are very positive about the sixth form and much appreciate the good quality of teaching and guidance they receive. They demonstrate a readiness to be involved in school affairs, including assisting staff and mentoring younger students. The consistently good teaching reflects the effective progress the school has made in improving students' learning experiences and helping them know how they can improve their coursework and prepare for examinations. Students on the applied and vocational courses do particularly well. Those doing academic A levels sometimes enter sixth form with lower grades than would traditionally be expected. Although students make good progress, overall standards are below average. The considerable strength of the sixth form is

the range of higher-level courses that build on the strong vocational and applied subjects in earlier years. Students also benefit from a compulsory core programme that includes sports and physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and guidance. The close consortium links with local schools further expands the range of course options. Students are guided and supported well, though the school recognises the need to better ensure that students make realistic course choices. Students valued the extra learning support and informed careers and higher education guidance. Increasing numbers of students are successful in their university applications. Sixth form leadership and management are reflective and responsive and this has resulted in good progress in terms of improving the curriculum, study facilities and student guidance so resulting in a steady rise in standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lesson plans show clearly how work will be provided at different levels for students of different abilities but particularly for the more able.
- Implement the planned strategies, including the better use of data, to ensure more students gain the higher levels and grades in national tests at Year 9 and at GCSE at Year 11.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter Adeyfield with low standards compared to national averages and make good progress so that by Year 11 they are broadly average. With some students entering sixth form with lower grades than normally expected for academic subjects, standards in the sixth form are below average. However, students make good progress overall and the school does well with the high number of students who need extra support with their learning enabling them to make good progress. The inclusion centre is particularly effective in helping to restore the confidence of learners who have struggled in the past. However, some of the most able students do not achieve as well as they might so that a below average proportion gain the highest levels in their GCSEs and in the national tests at Year 9. The school identified that students in Key Stage 4 made better progress than those in Key Stage 3 recently. Current tracking of how well students are doing show that this discrepancy is being tackled so that they make good progress throughout the school with standards on track to rise at Year 9 and Year 11. The school uses its specialism in Business and Enterprise effectively to drive up standards across all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enjoy being at the school and behave well in lessons and elsewhere. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is committed to including every student in all aspects of school life and treats them with respect and as individuals. As a result, students learn to develop a strong sense of care and concern for others. They say they feel safe and that there are few instances of bullying. When it does arise it is dealt with appropriately. Effective monitoring and follow-up procedures have improved levels of attendance, which are now broadly average. Students say that they feel safe and secure and this is supported by their parents. Students adopt healthy lifestyles because physical activity has a high profile in the school. Sometimes students do not always make healthy choices in the canteen. The school

council is very active and effective and has had an impact on decision making in the school. For example, helping to change the school uniform. The majority of students contribute well to the school and the wider community by raising money for charity and participating in community projects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The secure subject knowledge, clear lesson planning and good quality questioning of teachers ensures that students make good progress in lessons. The many good lessons seen were characterised by positive classroom relationships and high expectations of behaviour. On the whole, students are keen to do well and work diligently in lessons. There are examples of outstanding teaching where students are highly motivated and speak enthusiastically about their learning. In an excellent history lesson the teacher ensured that students became engrossed in their learning. This was because he provided a variety of activities, gave opportunities for students to develop their extended writing skills and made sure that they all knew what level they were working at. Students confidently explained what they needed to do to reach the next level of attainment. Teachers are good at giving students advice and guidance on how to tackle examination questions. Where teaching is less effective higher attaining students are not challenged sufficiently. This is because there are inconsistent approaches to ensuring that learning is fine-tuned to meet the needs of all students. Sometimes students are not given enough chance to develop their thinking and reasoning skills, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teaching in the sixth form is also good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school uses its specialist status as a business and enterprise college well to help all students develop a better understanding of economic well-being and working life and be more actively involved in their learning. Business education and information and communication technology is provided in all years and, in Years 10 and 11, students benefit from a much expanded range of vocational and applied courses. These include valuable links with the local college and young apprenticeship training in retailing. This range of opportunities meets the needs and interests of most students. The school recognises the need for greater opportunities for students to develop their thinking skills in earlier years.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and students in all years are very positive about the opportunities they have for sports, performing arts, enterprise activities and extra learning support and the impact these have on their development. In the sixth form, the range of courses is generally good and benefits from the local consortium arrangement that enables students to take subjects in other schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school places a very strong emphasis on the pastoral care of its students. All staff are committed to maintaining an environment in which students feel comfortable and grow in confidence. A dedicated pastoral care manager ensures that students have a source of effective support if they have concerns. The school has excellent links with outside organisations and agencies to ensure the welfare of students, including off-site provision for a small number. The high quality of care helps the small number of students who found it hard to succeed in a former school to settle in successfully at Adeyfield. All the systems and procedures required to ensure the safety and protection of students are fully in place. The school has good systems for checking how well individuals and groups of students are doing with their learning. These are used very effectively to identify those who need extra help, which is then provided. The school has been less successful in ensuring that information on progress ensures the most able to attain the highest grades. This is because lesson planning does not make effective enough use of tracking information to ensure that the most able get work that stretches them. Most students know the levels they are working at and the targets they are aiming for because staff share this information with them effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leaders at all levels are committed to continually improving all aspects of the school's performance and teamwork is a strong feature. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on thorough self-evaluation and review. As a result of this, there has been a marked improvement in the standards achieved by the end of Year 11. Senior and middle leaders have established a rigorous programme for monitoring teaching. This ensures that the quality of teaching is good. However, this does not always ensure that all teachers are making effective use of data provided to improve students' achievement. The astute governing body accurately evaluates the school's performance. It is demanding and holds the school to account robustly for its work by asking challenging questions. Financial management is very good and the school gives good value for money. The school has tackled the issues highlighted by the previous inspection well. In light of this and rising standards the school has good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	2	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

7 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Adeyfield School, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 4DE

My colleagues and I recently visited your school to carry out an inspection to check how well your school is doing. We enjoyed our time with you and would like to say thank you for talking to us and for being polite and courteous. We saw how well you behave in lessons and the good relationships you have with the staff. This helps you to learn well. You adopt healthy lifestyles and realise the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. We would also like to say that we were pleased at the improvement you have made to your attendance.

Your teachers teach you well and they are particularly good at supporting those of you who need more help with your learning. Overall, your school helps you to make good progress and many of you do well in tests and examinations. We believe Adeyfield to be a good school and so do the majority of your parents. The school takes good care of you and is led and managed well by the headteacher and his leadership team.

Even in a school that is good like yours there are always improvements to be made. We found two areas that could be better.

- Teachers should always make sure that all of you have work that challenges you to think hard.
- The school should ensure that more of you reach the higher grades in tests and examinations.

Best wishes

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead inspector