



Mayflower High School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 115232
LEA Essex

Inspection number 290173
Inspection dates 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector John Mitcheson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 under the same Act.

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Stock Road
School category	Community		Billericay
Age range of pupils	11-18		Essex
			CM12 0RT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01277 623171
Number on roll	1418	Fax number	01277 632256
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Stephanie Dawkins
Date of previous inspection	March 2001	Headteacher	Linda Bamford

Age group 11 - 18	Published July 2006	Reference no. 290173
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior managers, head of sixth form, heads of core subjects, 2 groups of students and the chair of governors. Inspectors conducted 4 paired observations, scrutinised documentation, students' work and 291 questionnaires returned by parents.

Description of the school

Mayflower High School is a large, mixed comprehensive school with 1418 students aged 11-18 serving the social and economically advantaged area of Billericay. Most students are White British, although there is a small proportion with minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for a free school meal, with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those who have a statement of special educational need is below that found nationally. The school has a specialist centre for dyslexic children on site and has held specialist status in science and mathematics since 2003. Attainment on entry is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Mayflower High School is a good school that strives to ensure all young people feel valued and respected. It has a well established, caring ethos in which students feel safe, healthy and want to do their very best. This is a popular, over-subscribed school that plays an active role in community life and is well supported by the vast majority of parents. Students' personal development and well being are real strengths of the school. Attendance is above average and excellent behaviour and attitudes result in very few students being excluded. Students enjoy school and wear their school uniform with pride. Parents report that, 'I have seen great improvements to my child's confidence and self-esteem', and another says, 'My child genuinely looks forward to going to school in the mornings with the knowledge that he has the support of all staff.'

Standards are above what is expected nationally at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been above average for the past three years and in 2005, 57% of Year 11 students achieved five good pass grades including English and mathematics, which is quite a notable achievement. Students with a statement of special educational need achieve well as a direct result of the high quality care and support they receive. The school anticipates it will meet the challenging targets it has set itself this year and maintain its consistently high standards.

Progress is good overall; it is better Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Results in recent tests at the end of Year 9 show that a small proportion of more able students did not achieve as well as they could have. However, the school has taken decisive action to address this by making more regular checks of how well students are doing and providing additional support to those who need it. The school's own data indicates more students will achieve their potential in this year's tests and examinations, and students report that they feel teachers give them good information on how well they are doing. Assessment has improved, but a common system for tracking all students' progress across the school would help to raise achievement further.

Students are well organised, eager to learn and willing to take on extra responsibilities such as prefect, counsellor or member of the school council. The role of prefect is particularly well-developed; the prefects supervise other students' behaviour and monitor their uniform which adds considerably to the respectful, caring ethos of the school. Pupils speak highly of the opportunities to participate in sport, music and performing arts before, during and after school. They feel that school is a safe place to be; if students have concerns they can approach any teacher or older student for help. All necessary procedures to ensure vulnerable children are protected are in place.

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often good; there are very few ineffective lessons. Not all teachers' planning matches work to the needs of all learners, or sets meaningful targets to help students improve. Good quality

classrooms, particularly the refurbished science laboratories enhance student learning, but there is scope to make more effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in most subjects. The curriculum offers a good range of courses which is planned more effectively in Key Stage 4. The strengths of this system are to be extended into Key stage 3 this year to raise achievement further by ensuring the interests and abilities of all students are met.

The care, guidance and support provided for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is a strength of the school. They benefit from coordinated additional support in lessons and one to one support from teachers and learning assistants. One parent reported that, 'The support my son receives from the special needs department is excellent, liaison between us is very good and with their help he is making continued good progress within a mainstream environment'. The specialist dyslexia unit provides high quality support for a small number of students of all ages from within and outside the school's catchment area.

The headteacher provides outstanding strategic leadership and displays a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has empowered others to lead by example, and developed a leadership team that has good capacity to make further improvements. In return, senior leaders and middle managers have adopted a corporate responsibility for raising achievement. However, students' progress has not been checked well enough and this is an area for development. Governors are actively involved in monitoring the school's performance and regularly invite senior managers and subject leaders to report how well their subjects are doing.

Grade: 2

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

The sixth form is satisfactory. Standards have been higher in recent years but efforts to attract a wider range of students into the sixth form have led to some studying courses that have not matched their prior achievements and consequently, high standards have not been maintained. Improved leadership and management are providing better guidance on suitable pathways for prospective students. This includes work related courses, re-sits of GCSE examinations and the extension of key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Students have their own dedicated social facilities; they enjoy good relations with their teachers and act as role models for the rest of the school. Most take part in timetabled recreation and engage in fund-raising activities with the local community.

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards

Overall, students make satisfactory progress and achieve good results. At Key Stage 3, the results of national tests in English mathematics and science have been better than the national average for the past three years. In Years 10 and 11 most students make rapid progress but last year a small proportion of more able students capable of achieving pass grades in GCSE English and mathematics did not do so. Results in GCSE examinations are consistently higher than the national average. More than half the number of Year 11 students achieved at least five good pass grades including English and mathematics in last year's examinations.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Personal development and well being are outstanding features of the school. Students told inspectors that the school is a very safe place to be, bullying is rare and the support provided by student counsellors is exemplary. Students are proud to play in sports teams, act as prefects and represent others' views on the school council. They feel their views are listened too and valued by staff. Students are extremely well behaved, polite, welcoming and eager to comment on school life. Students' spiritual, moral and cultural education is reinforced well through year group assemblies and tutorials. Assemblies in particular provide excellent opportunities for communal prayer and time to reflect and consider the welfare of others. Charitable work is an integral feature of the school and all students participate in fund-raising. They enjoy healthy food at lunchtimes, have easy access to water around school and participate in many different sports and pastimes during lunch and after school. All students can gain an accredited award in physical education and sport.

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, reflected in the mostly good progress made by pupils throughout the school. The lessons observed by inspectors were satisfactory with some strengths and confirmed the school's view that the quality is rising and that the proportion of good or better teaching far outweighs any shortcomings. Relationships between staff and students are very positive, behaviour is excellent and students apply themselves well in group work and independent study. Marking of students' books provides them with good advice on how to improve but this is not yet consistent in all subjects. Students comment favourably about those teachers who plan lots of different ways of learning and make lessons enjoyable.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Curriculum provision is good; alongside their main subject options all students gain a qualification in religious studies, physical education and ICT. Many more able students study in excess of 10 subjects at GCSE level. Over the past few years the school has focused on improving GCSE results by guiding Key Stage 4 students into curriculum 'pathways' that match their abilities and interests and equip them with the skills they need to move into the sixth form or the world of work. This has had a marked impact on raising achievement and therefore, the school is planning to extend this initiative into Key Stage 3 so that all learners can achieve their very best.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Students receive high quality care and support from all staff, and as a result the vast majority thoroughly enjoy school. A significant number of students act as counsellors to support younger students who may have concerns, helping them to settle in when they arrive in Year 7. Pastoral leaders and form tutors now monitor students' progress. Guidance should be coordinated more effectively so all students know exactly how well they are doing and senior managers know exactly who is doing well and who may be at risk of under-achieving.

Grade 2

Leadership and management

Self evaluation judges leadership and management to be outstanding but inspectors do not agree and feel it is good overall. This is because whilst the school has made good progress since the previous inspection and continues to achieve high standards, students' progress has not been monitored as effectively as it could be. Partnership working with a range of other schools and organisations has a positive impact on both students and staff. A teaching and learning group consisting of senior managers, teachers and governors is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning and improve the delivery, monitoring and overall effectiveness of the curriculum for students of all ages.

Grade: 2

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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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 <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	1	
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 learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
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	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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

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The Students
Mayflower High School
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CM12 0RT

20 June 2006.

Dear Students,

Earlier this week I visited your school with one other inspector. We talked and listened to many of you, your teachers and governors. We spent time in lessons, watched an assembly and read the many letters from your parents. Throughout all this your behaviour was exceptional and you made us feel very welcome.

Mayflower High School is a good school. We know from talking to you that you are very proud of it and thoroughly enjoy being part of it. You enjoy coming to school; you feel safe and welcomed by friendly staff and other pupils. You all display very positive attitudes and many of you are willing to accept responsibility. Your work as prefects, as school council members and the duties you carry out as CHIPS counsellors are exceptional, and contribute greatly towards making this a good school that pupils and parents are pleased with. Sixth form students present good role models for younger members of the school.

Teachers help you very much by caring for you, providing a wealth of clubs, activities and visits for you to take part in, and by providing lessons that stimulate your interest. You all care for, and benefit from the good facilities in school but we have asked senior staff to place a stronger emphasis on the use of ICT in all subjects. The standards you achieve in Key Stages 3 and 4 and the progress you make from entering in Year 7 to the end of Year 11 are better than in most schools. Many of you achieve good results in GCSE examinations. We have asked teachers to provide you with information much more regularly on how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve your work to achieve a higher grade.

The headteacher and her staff lead and manage your school well. The school has great plans for the future and you can play a part in them by letting your school council representatives know what your views are so they can relay them to senior staff.

Once again thank you for your kind welcome, we wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector.