

# Testbourne Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116502
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338831
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Harrett

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	764
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Penny Horner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hilary Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Micheldever Road Whitchurch, Hampshire Whitchurch RG28 7JF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Thirty-three lessons were observed taught by 33 teachers. Meetings were held with teachers, groups of students and a representative of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including assessment and tracking data, the school development plan, school policies and the governing body minutes, evaluations by the School Improvement Partner and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors analysed the responses of 202 parents and carers who returned questionnaires, and the responses of questionnaires returned by students and staff.

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

- How has the school secured improvements in achievement since the past inspection and does it have good or better capacity to sustain such improvements?
- How consistent are school leaders at all levels in driving improvements in teaching, learning and students' outcomes?
- Has the school made sufficient progress in narrowing the gaps in achievement between subjects and groups of students? What is the impact of students' behaviour and attitudes to learning on achievement?
- What is the impact of students' behaviour and attitudes to learning on achievement?

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average secondary school, though numbers have risen as a result of planned expansion over time. It has specialist status in the performing arts and the Artsmark Gold award. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. Although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average, there is an average proportion of students on the register of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has International School status. For its provision in information and communication technology (ICT) and sport, the school has been awarded the ICTmark and Sportsmark.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

In this outstanding school, excellent leadership and management have resulted in significant improvements since the last inspection. Attainment in GCSE examinations has risen and is now high. The personal development of the students throughout the school is excellent. Rigorous self-evaluation and meticulous planning have ensured that the school now has an outstanding curriculum which motivates and engages students in their learning. The school's 'rainbow pathways' provide them with an excellent range of courses to fit their needs and aspirations. Exceptionally good partnerships with other providers and agencies underpin the curriculum and the excellent care, guidance and support. Students feel entirely safe and secure in school. They fully appreciate the school's insistence on promoting 'Rights, Respect and Responsibility' and make an excellent contribution to the school and the community. They are proud of their school, confident in their teachers and show this through excellent behaviour around the school and in lessons. A very high proportion of those parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed their full confidence in the school.

Rigorous monitoring of the students' progress and careful identification of particular groups and individuals have enabled the school to put in place extra support for them. An extensive range of strategies include: mentoring; extra classes; careful tracking of individual progress; and provision of support with completion of coursework. Consequently, students make good progress from their starting points to reach high standards. The provision for gifted and talented students is exemplary in its rigour, planning and application, resulting in high achievement for this group of students throughout the school. Teaching is securely good overall and occasionally outstanding, but its quality is suppressed below the excellence of other aspects of provision by the persistence of elements of satisfactory practice, sometimes evident even in lessons which are good overall. In particular, the quality of assessment, notably marking, is inconsistent. Although there is some excellent practice, notably in the most successful subjects such as English, marking varies considerably within and across departments in terms of regularity and quality. Books are sometimes left unmarked for too long and some comments give no indication of precisely why a piece of work is judged good or not, or of how it could be improved. This lack of clarity in marking sometimes leads to lesson planning which does not address the specific needs of individuals and groups in classes. Although many aspects of teaching are good, the quality of questioning is inconsistent, with too much that simply seeks correct answers from volunteers rather than probing students to extend and explain their conclusions.

The excellent quality of leadership and management in driving the school forward has been the key to the improvements made since the last inspection. Leaders have used rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, identifying areas for improvement and planning carefully to bring these about. Staff enjoy working in this supportive and forward-looking

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environment, playing their part well in bringing about positive change. Along with the rise in achievement and the excellent quality of personal development, outstanding self-evaluation and planning show that the school has an excellent capacity to make even greater improvement in the future.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that leaders at all levels:
  - establish clear procedures and expectations for the marking of students' work so that it regularly establishes what has been achieved and how it can be improved.
  - find ways to ensure that assessment information is used to plan lessons so that a range of activities is appropriately designed to match the particular requirements of individuals and groups. devise methods of disseminating the excellent questioning techniques observed in some lessons across the school.
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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>1</b>
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Attainment in the school has been rising and is now high at the end of Year 11. Results in GCSEs are consistently significantly above average, with a considerable rise in the proportion of students attaining A and A\* grades in the examinations in 2010. There has also been a narrowing of the gaps between subjects with improvements in subjects such as geography, mathematics and religious education. Gaps between different groups of students have also been closing because the school targets those identified as requiring extra help very well. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. Students respond well to the excellent relationships between them and teachers, behaving excellently and having exceptional attitudes to their learning. They respond well to the challenges presented to them by the best teaching, getting fully engaged in their learning and enjoying the challenges with which they are presented. For example, in an excellent history lesson in Year 10, the students responded superbly to the learning activities when considering the reasons for enlisting and for conscientious objection in the First World War. Within thirty minutes, students had worked as a whole class, individually and in groups to explore the issues. They responded rapidly to requirements to answer questions quickly, accompanied by suitably fast-paced music. They thought about what their own responses would have been in the circumstances, and took careful notes of the main points of a documentary film. The brisk, purposeful activities engaged them all excellently.

Students make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. The active school council is valued by the students, who have many opportunities to contribute through other channels such as the prefect system, taking responsibility in the library and acting as mentors. All groups of pupils play their part in these activities. Students' attendance is high and their punctuality excellent. They are successfully encouraged to have high aspirations with numerous opportunities to be enterprising. Students, and their parents and carers, are very positive about how well they are prepared for their future. The school's provision for promoting healthy lifestyles is good, but some students felt that more could be done to encourage their response to it. Their social, moral, spiritual and

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cultural development is excellent, with outstanding opportunities for reflection in assemblies, inspirational displays around the school and excellent international links.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, students make good progress because of their excellent behaviour and because teachers plan carefully to involve and challenge everyone. On the occasions when inspectors saw teaching inspire students, they responded with maturity and confidence, for example in a BTEC drama lesson where students were highly convincing in taking on challenging and unfamiliar roles as they performed spine-tingling monologues. Satisfactory teaching persists in a small minority of lessons, often because a narrow range of teacher-led questions does not give students enough opportunity to extend their thinking fully. Students and their parents and carers valued their academic review days, which provide overarching information about their attainment and progress. Assessment in lessons, although inconsistently reflected in teachers' marking and planning, is good, with students generally having sufficient time to reflect on their learning.

The outstanding curriculum supports learning excellently throughout the school. Imaginative developments at Key Stage 3, such as the 'This is Me' project, have a strong and successful focus on personal learning and thinking skills, which are also addressed well in subjects. The very broad range of academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4 is highly valued by students. A high proportion of students continue to study a modern

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foreign language at GCSE and do so successfully. The curriculum reflects the specialist status in performing arts well, with increasing proportions following new courses in the specialist subjects and achieving well. The specialist status is also well represented in the very broad range of enrichment activities for which the participation rates by all groups of students are high.

Outstanding care, guidance and support underpin successful academic achievement and excellent personal development. Students requiring support and intervention are identified swiftly and the school works in close partnership with others to ensure that their needs are fully met. Case studies of vulnerable students reveal striking examples of individuals making exceptional progress as a result of the care, guidance and support they receive.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's excellent leadership has been instrumental in ensuring a relentless focus on improving the school from its good quality at the last inspection. Leadership at all levels in the school has improved. The headteacher is ably supported by a strong team of senior leaders and the quality of middle leadership has improved considerably, driving the rise in standards and maintaining the school's excellent ethos well. The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school, providing excellent support and a level of challenge that keeps the school focused on its forward drive. Most importantly, communications and procedures ensure that leadership and management at all levels are well integrated, creating a school in which lines of accountability and responsibility are clearly understood. In this exceptionally well-run school, staff report that they have confidence in the leadership, enjoy their work, and are fully signed up to making further progress. A key finding of this inspection is that the school is ambitious to continue making improvements, even where provision and outcomes are already excellent. Leaders have ensured that the specialism in performing arts improves the opportunities for students to participate in the life of the school and to achieve well in the specialist subjects.

Although the school has been very successful in improving provision and outcomes in many areas, the rate of improvement in teaching and learning, though secure, has not been as rapid. The school has worked well in partnership with the local authority to raise standards, and has had a definite impact on the attainment and progress of particular groups, such as gifted and talented students, and in some subjects. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment. Although there are pockets of excellence in these areas, the school has not yet managed to tap this resource to spread the excellent practice throughout the school.

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The promotion of community cohesion is good. On the local and international levels it is excellent, but improving the students' knowledge and respect of the diversity of cultures and communities within the United Kingdom, though developing well and of good quality, is not so well established. At the time of the inspection, arrangements for safeguarding students met requirements and were outstanding overall. Promoting equality and tackling discrimination is at the heart of the school's excellent work. The progress of groups is monitored closely and actions taken to overcome any areas of inequality. The single equalities plan and the setting up of an equality and diversity group have added an extra impetus to this already outstanding aspect of the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A very high proportion of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires expressed complete faith and confidence in the school. They are satisfied that the school prepares their children well for the future, keeps them safe and that they are taught well. These very positive views were not shared by everybody. However, there was no particular pattern to the few complaints or concerns about the school and the inspection found no evidence to endorse them, though they were investigated and brought to the school's attention.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Testbourne Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 202 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 764 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	44	106	52	6	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	114	56	86	43	1	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	103	51	91	45	6	3	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	88	44	102	50	8	4	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	88	44	109	54	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	36	114	56	11	5	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	26	127	63	14	7	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	94	47	98	49	3	1	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	80	40	110	54	8	4	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	90	45	95	47	11	5	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	35	113	56	6	3	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	111	55	85	42	3	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	60	73	36	4	2	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### 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.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 November 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Testbourne Community School, Whitchurch, RG28 7JF**

Thank you for the help and welcome that you gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour when we spoke to you in groups and informally around the school. We agree with the opinion that was expressed by many of you in our discussions: Testbourne is an outstanding school.

Attainment in GCSE examinations is high and you make good progress in your learning. Your personal development is excellent. The school has been very successful in devising an excellent curriculum which matches your requirements superbly, and in maintaining outstanding care, guidance and support. This has been achieved through the excellent work of leaders and managers at all levels, creating a school in which teachers thrive in their work and students enjoy their learning.

Although teaching and learning are securely good in the school, we think that they could improve further. Inspectors thought that although assessment is good, marking is inconsistent and we want the school to make sure that its regularity and helpfulness are improved. We also want teachers to think about how to plan activities in lessons that are more carefully matched to your individual requirements and to make sure that they use questions to challenge you and to get you to explain your answers.

You make an excellent contribution to the ethos of the school through your responsiveness to the education you receive and your appreciation of the effective ways in which the adults at the school help you. I am sure that you will continue to do so in the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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