

# Central Foundation Boys' School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100458
<b>Local Authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	335546
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carmen Rodney

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	880
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Forbes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jamie Brownhill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Cowper Street London EC2A 4SH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 42 lessons taught by 40 teachers. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, three groups of students and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents such as the school improvement plan, attendance data and policies for risk assessment, equality and behaviour. In addition, the questionnaire responses of 44 parents and carers and 131 students were analysed and their views taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of students during Key Stage 4 and the extent to which the school meets the needs of all groups.
- The use of monitoring and evaluation in planning for improvement and the accuracy of assessment information.
- The impact of strategies to ensure that students behave well and attend regularly.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels to secure improvement in provision and the capacity to sustain these improvements. The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels to secure improvement in provision and the capacity to sustain these improvements.

## Information about the school

Central Foundation Boys' School is an ethnically diverse school that is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. While a small minority of students are of White British heritage, the majority are from minority ethnic heritages but very few are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The school has identified that almost a quarter of all students have special educational needs and/or disabilities but the proportion with a formal statement of special educational needs is high. The most common additional needs are behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. The number of students on roll has increased since the last inspection. The sixth form includes a few girls and is one of four schools in the Islington Sixth Form Consortium.

The school has specialist status in business and enterprise. It has achieved the Healthy School award and the British Council International School status.

The new headteacher, previously a senior deputy headteacher at the school, was appointed to the permanent post at the start of September 2010.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Central Foundation Boys' School is a good school and is rapidly improving. The headteacher has successfully sustained a number of improvements, of which the boys are very proud. In particular, the students are making good progress in their learning with a majority exceeding their targets. As a result, attainment is above average at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form. This is an impressive achievement given the high proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The unvalidated GCSE and A-level results in 2010 rose substantially confirming the year-on-year trend of improvement. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

There are a number of key factors contributing to the school's success. First, the headteacher is committed to making big improvements. His strong leadership skills have enabled him to take staff with him. He has, therefore, clearly communicated his ambitions for the school and is ably supported by a strong team of senior and middle leaders. Together, they demonstrate commitment and there is effective team work to select and deliver the right strategic plans that will improve outcomes. Second, staff know the students exceptionally well and the exemplary care and guidance ensure they are given highly effective and personalised support. Third, the school's work with external partners is outstanding. This is leading to better outcomes for students and is contributing strongly to their personal development. Additionally, productive links with the vast majority of parents and community groups are used effectively to support students' learning and personal development. Fourth, the specialist status is central to the school's inclusive and far-reaching approach to driving curriculum development and academic attainment. The specialism reaches into the local, legal and business communities as well as higher educational establishments. It is also used very well to promote community cohesion.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. While the school has done much to improve teaching, senior leaders and the governing body recognise that there is still more to do. There is increasing awareness that although all students make good progress, there are inconsistencies in teaching and the quality of marking. In addition, in the sixth form, there is little evaluation of teaching and learning to identify the impact on students' performance.







Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in tackling the areas for improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, know the strengths and areas for improvement very well. Clear lines of accountability, beginning with the governing body and headteacher through to senior and middle leaders and all staff, ensure continuous and rigorous monitoring. A culture of high expectations underpins the school's work. The school has achieved much in a short time by successfully closing the achievement gap for all ethnic groups when results are compared to similar groups

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nationally. This sustained improvement confirms that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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

- Further develop teaching to ensure that a higher proportion is consistently good       or better, so that all students can make exceptional progress, by:
  - making better use of short-term plans to prepare well-structured lessons that will accelerate learning.
  - consistently sharing and developing the best practice .
  - ensuring that day-to-day marking in Years 7 to 9 is consistently thorough in relation to developing skills across the curriculum, helping students to understand how they can improve their work and presentation skills.
  - ensuring that teaching challenges all students.

In the sixth form

- Further develop clear systems for evaluating teaching and learning by:
  - making effective and efficient use of assessment data to identify the performance of individuals and groups of students.
  - linking progress to the quality of provision in lessons. linking progress to the quality of provision in lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students enter the school with broadly average attainment and their achievement is good by the end of Year 11. Attainment, previously in line with the national average, was significantly above average in 2010 for all students in English and mathematics. This trend of improvement from 2009 to the current academic year has been sustained well and the unvalidated results indicate that students made outstanding progress. Standards in the specialist subject are also well above average. All students, irrespective of their ethnicity or ability, made similar progress. In particular, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the gifted and talented and those who do not speak English as their first language made even better progress than in previous years. The achievement of students at both key stages is consistently good or outstanding and includes those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. Early examination entry is used very well to raise aspirations and develop positive attitudes to learning. During the inspection, observation of lessons and analysis of early entry results indicate that students are mostly making good or better progress.

Relationships throughout the school community are strong and contribute to students aspiring to do well because staff know the students very well. Mutual respect between them is very good, as is the use of humour in and out of the classroom. The school fosters respect for different cultural heritages and there is good cooperation between students. As a result, there are very few racist or bullying incidents among students. They are confident that if unacceptable behaviour occurs, staff will deal with it quickly and confidentially. This awareness of others extends to students having a strong sense of right and wrong and

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reinforces all aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students feel extremely safe and are clear that the school has effective systems in place to protect them from any potential harm. Students are assured of this because the curriculum covers a wide range of topics on safety. Additionally, senior leaders maintain a visible presence in the locality and well-developed links with external services confirm that the well-being of students is at the forefront of the school's provision. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community and are very proud to act as ambassadors. Attendance is above average because measures to improve persistent absence are working. While students' academic progress makes a good contribution to their economic well-being, preparation for the next stage of their life is very well supported through their involvement in enterprise-related activities in school and the local community.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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>2</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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</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?**

Most teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan thoroughly and meet students' learning needs. In the most effective lessons, relationships are relaxed, resources are carefully selected, there is good pace and teachers use a range of strategies including whole-class teaching, paired, group or independent work to engage students and build on their skills. Talk is used well to develop thinking and communication skills. For example, there is effective questioning and modelling using the interactive whiteboard to explain

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and consolidate learning. This is highly effective particularly when learning is broken down into small blocks and questions are used to probe and assess students' understanding. Students are keen to learn but there are variations in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. For example, questioning is not always used effectively to broaden and extend learning and the potential of the interactive whiteboard to stimulate learning is not always explored. Furthermore, in a few lessons, work is not well matched to individual needs and leads to students being disengaged.

The school has robust systems for tracking the progress of students and using early intervention to adjust and set targets that are far more challenging or to provide additional help. While regular analyses and evaluation of examination and test results are contributing to outstanding care, guidance and support, books are not always carefully marked to identify errors with enough detailed comments to help students understand how they can improve their targets.

Students benefit from an outstanding curriculum that is imaginative and flexible. It meets their interests and individual needs very well. Different pathways, including the more traditional academic subjects, provide students with a wide range of offers from which to choose. The specialism enhances the curriculum and enrichment activities very well and outcomes are improving in other subjects across the curriculum. This is because the exposure to business and enterprise opportunity is transforming students' lives and contributing to them developing a mature approach to their studies. The specialism is also used to develop exceptionally good transitional links with primary schools. For example, the transition process is well structured, beginning in Year 5 and extending through to the sixth form.

All students, and in particular those who are gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, receive highly specialised care that is tailored to their needs. Students feel very well supported and value highly the careers guidance and support given when they move on to the next phase of their learning. ♦

*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 has skilfully prioritised and targeted actions to improve academic outcomes. He has made things happen and delivered tough messages about raising aspirations. He has enabled leaders and managers at all levels to take ownership of the actions to make further improvements. Increased accountability and regular line

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management, linked to performance management, ensure that students' progress is kept under scrutiny and reported regularly to senior leaders, parents and carers. Further work to improve teaching and learning has started. The school's vision of raising aspirations is linked to its close work with external services, organisations and parents and carers. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school. It provides good support, holds the school to account and challenges its work.

The school upholds all aspects of equality very well by working hard to ensure that all groups have equal access to services and opportunities to achieve well. Additionally, the school ensures that barriers, if any, can be dismantled. For example, there has been clear and incisive use of data to identify and improve the achievement of underperforming groups, notably White British students and those of Caribbean heritage. Community cohesion is promoted well through local, national and international links. In particular, strong links with a wide range of community groups foster a good understanding of different cultures. Safeguarding requirements are robust and there is good attention to reviewing and updating a wide range of policies regularly. The school uses its resources very well to achieve good and improving value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</b>

## Sixth form

Students' achievement is outstanding. They enter the sixth form with attainment that historically is below average, but by the end of Year 13 results in the A-level, BTEC and other courses are above average. The good results have been sustained and are improving year on year. Students enjoy supportive relationships in school with their teachers and with each other. Monitoring is thorough and students' progress is kept under review. The quality of teaching is good, with emphasis on developing independent learning. Nevertheless, there is not a systematic approach to evaluating and analysing the



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information on teaching and learning to identify and compare the performance of different groups, in particular when assessments take place.

The curriculum across the consortium is outstanding and covers a range of courses across schools. A flexible timetable provides opportunities for movement between schools. Enrichment outcomes are very strong and the exceptional links within the community, for example local lawyers and other businesses, provide students with high quality support and advice when preparing for university or seeking work experience. This partnership, par excellence, is contributing to raising aspirations. Exceptionally good care and guidance, provided through regular assessments and target setting, support students' study very well. In particular, attendance is high as is the retention rate.

The sixth form is very well led. The leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, head of the sixth form and head of the consortium, are highly respected. Like the main school, there is a clear vision for developing the sixth form and students have a voice in decision making. The excellent engagement with external partners and sharing of information across the key stages and within the consortium ensure that provision is tailored well to students' needs.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers who responded to the parental questionnaire are very positive about almost all aspects of the school's work. They are particularly pleased about their children's safety and experience as well as the good or better progress they make. The very few concerns around communication, unacceptable behaviour, meeting students' needs and encouraging healthy lifestyles were explored during the inspection. The inspection evidence confirmed that the school has developed and implemented plans to deal with each issue raised.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Central Foundation Boys' 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 880 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	39	24	55	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	23	33	75	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	36	27	61	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	34	27	61	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	34	26	59	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	23	30	68	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	18	29	66	6	14	1	2
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)	12	27	23	52	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	25	22	50	6	14	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	25	25	57	6	14	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	9	28	64	4	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	23	30	68	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	30	30	68	1	2	0	0

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.**



19 November 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Central Foundation Boys' School, London EC2A 4SH**

On behalf of the inspectors who inspected your school recently, I would like to thank you all for helping us to gather the evidence. We enjoyed meeting a number of you to find out your views about the school. A special thanks to the students who completed the questionnaire.

Central Foundation Boys' is indeed a good and improving school and you are rightly very proud and supportive of all of its work. The school is helping you to achieve well and results are improving each year. In 2010, the GCSE results in English and mathematics were well above average and students made outstanding progress. Well done! This has been possible because the headteacher, staff and the governing body are very ambitious for you. They are determined to transform your lives and so they are doing everything possible to support you in your learning and prepare you well for your future. In fact, the quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding as is the curriculum. The school takes every precaution necessary to keep you safe. You were very positive about this as well as the way in which you are given exceptional opportunities to extend your understanding of business enterprise.

You are also learning well because your behaviour and attendance are good. The few who are often absent are responding well to the actions for them to attend regularly. You enjoy very good relationships with each other and your teachers. Although you are all doing very well, the school is not yet satisfied with its achievement and is determined to make sure that all of you receive 'a first class education'. We have therefore asked the school to do two things to reach this goal. First, not all teaching and learning are yet consistently good or outstanding and your books are not always carefully marked to help you improve further. Second, in the sixth form, we have asked the leaders and managers to evaluate the quality of teaching when looking at your performance, in particular when assessments take place. ♦

You have a school to be proud of and I am sure that you will continue to work with the staff as they seek to make it a better place. We wish you and the school every success.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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