

Goffs School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 117587 |
| Local Authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 358165 |
| Inspection dates | 24–25 November 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Margaret Jones HMI |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1285 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 255 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Paul Anstey |
| Headteacher | Alison Garner |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 December 2007 |
| School address | Goffs Lane Waltham Cross EN7 5QW |
| Telephone number | 01992 424200 |
| Fax number | 01992 424200 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 49 lessons and 49 teachers and held meetings with the staff, groups of students, members of the governing body, and the School Improvement Partner. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including: improvement plans, the analysis and tracking of students' progress, records of classroom observations, attendance and exclusion data, and monitoring information. Inspection questionnaires returned by 117 parents and carers and 250 students were evaluated.

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

- Is learning and progress good enough across all subjects and groups of learners and is it rigorously tracked and monitored?
- How effective have the steps taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning been, particularly with regard to the quality of marking and assessment?
- What is the impact of behaviour on achievement?
- What is the impact of the personalised curriculum on achievement and progress for different groups?

Information about the school

The school is a larger-than-average mixed comprehensive. It serves a mixed catchment of urban and rural communities from Cheshunt and its surrounding areas. The school has had three headteachers in the past three years. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The great majority of students are White British with about 13% from minority ethnic communities. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school is a specialist language college. It has achieved the International School and Arts Mark Silver awards.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Goffs School's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, but it is rapidly improving. It is a harmonious community where the staff provide a safe, secure and caring learning environment. This is evident in the outstanding care and flexible support provided, especially for those students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or whose circumstances mean they need additional support. A significant programme of school transformation started in 2009. The most recent change in headship has not impeded the school's drive for improvement, but rather has brought even higher expectations.

The initiatives introduced by the leadership team, especially the excellent personalised curriculum, have resulted in a dramatic improvement in attainment. In 2010, the school recorded its best ever examination results so that virtually all students achieved five A* to C grades at GCSE. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics rose 19 percentage points from 2009 to 2010 and the school's ambitious targets were met. The headteacher took decisive action to improve the leadership of key departments. Progress in English and mathematics improved as a result. Robust monitoring to identify students who are falling behind is complemented by a wide range of successful intervention strategies to support them. This has resulted in an overall increase in students' rate of progress. Data analysis suggests that outcomes in both attainment and progress might continue to improve this year. Sixth formers make good progress. Outcomes in the sixth form have improved and are now good. Following turbulence in staffing, the profile of specialist language college status has been strengthened over the past year and performance targets have been largely met. Overall attainment in languages is above average with some variation between the different languages studied.

The senior leaders, including the governing body, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses through robust self-evaluation. Self-evaluation draws on a comprehensive range of evidence and identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. The quality of students' learning varies across lessons and this affects rates of progress. The students enjoy lessons where they are challenged by practical tasks and have opportunities to discuss their learning in pairs and small groups. Although teaching in the sixth form is good, there is not enough good teaching across the main school. The students are often too passive and are not challenged to think deeply or justify their answers. There are too few planned opportunities for the students to develop their speaking and self-presentation skills. Although assessment, progress-tracking and the use of data to inform lesson planning have improved greatly, the use and quality of day-to-day marking of students' work to help them improve remains inconsistent. In three quarters of the lessons observed, the students had positive attitudes to learning, behaved well and worked cooperatively. However, in a small minority of lessons, a low level of inattention and negative attitudes limited learning for all.

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A limited number of students take part in contributing to the community. The school acknowledges that, in the drive to raise standards, this has taken a back seat. However, it is now ready to revitalise and develop it.

The senior leaders have demonstrated a good capacity to bring about improvement through challenging target-setting, changes in departmental leadership, analysis and tracking of data and successful intervention strategies. They are assisted in their work by an outstanding governing body that makes an exceptional and welcomed contribution to the direction of the school. Performance in the key areas of attainment and progress has improved significantly as a result of the strategies. The school's capacity for further sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress by:
 - providing greater challenge for the most able students
 - placing greater emphasis on learning and progress in all lessons
 - encouraging the students to be more articulate and to improve their skills of self-presentation.
- Increase the number of good and outstanding lessons by:
 - providing more opportunities for the students to learn independently
 - ensuring the quality and consistency of marking across and within departments
 - using better questioning to engage and challenge the students to think more deeply about their learning.
- Establish a broad range of student-led activities that contribute to supporting the school and the broader community.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry is broadly average, although the school has a large number of able students. Evidence from the students' work indicates that the majority make satisfactory progress and go on to gain good examination results. The students do particularly well in and enjoy mathematics, design and technology, physical education, languages and vocational and business courses. The school has identified specific groups of learners who did not perform as well as they could have done, such as those who did not achieve the proportion of GCSE A* and A grades expected. Such students are now being targeted to support better achievement. The very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated and achieve as well as other students. The small number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because of the well-targeted extra help and support they are given. The students know their targets and most know what they need to do to improve. They show enjoyment in many lessons, but self-presentation and speaking skills are not well enough developed.

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The students report that there are a few occasions when their learning is affected by low-level disruption. However, they comment very favourably on recent improvements in behaviour due to greater consistency in the application of sanctions and rewards. Most students feel safe in school and say that bullying is dealt with effectively. They are clear about the risks to their health posed by certain conduct, habits and substances and understand the need for healthy eating and exercise. The students participate enthusiastically in the good range of extra-curricular physical activities provided. The canteen staff ensure that the healthy meals prepared appeal to the students' likes. Consequently, the take-up of school meals is high.

Groups of students, particularly sixth formers, take on responsibilities around the school, including involvement in consultations and acting as peer mentors. Some contribute well as junior sports leaders in local primary schools. Curriculum enrichment such as trips to the theatre and involvement in drama and music productions and international links promoted by the school's specialist status support students' cultural development. However, there is little emphasis on the celebration of cultural diversity in modern Britain. Spiritual reflection is encouraged in assemblies and through a 'thought for the day'. Attendance is improving. Attendance figures are average, but rates of persistent absence are declining.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

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

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How effective is the provision?

Relationships in lessons are good and the staff create a positive atmosphere for learning. The teachers have access to a comprehensive range of assessment information, which they use well to plan well-structured lessons that generally meet the needs of the students. In the better lessons, questioning is used effectively to probe and challenge understanding and the students make good progress because of opportunities to work independently. Where this does not happen, the pace of learning slows and the students become restless. Not all books and homework are marked regularly and, as a result, not all students understand how to improve.

The school has devised a genuinely innovative curriculum that places student engagement and the maximisation of potential at its heart. A "stage not age" approach has meant that many students start their GCSE work in Year 9. This extra time has allowed some to study for longer and in more depth, whilst the most able have been able to complete their GCSE courses early and start on enrichment and AS courses, leading to better results. The curriculum is aligned effectively with sophisticated tracking and monitoring to enable the focus of the school to be firmly on improvement. Excellent 'pathways' to further and higher education and work and the school's partnerships to broaden the range of subjects offered in the sixth form provide a highly effective curriculum experience. Excellent vocational provision and strongly complementary information, advice and guidance give the students opportunities for learning of workplace skills and prepare them well for their future lives.

The extensive pastoral system ensures that additional support is provided for all groups of students. Outstanding support is provided for students with medical and social needs. This includes well-informed specialist staff provided within school and by outside agencies and which is a factor in enabling all students to succeed. Information about careers and future educational opportunities enable the students to make informed decisions about which courses to take. Both attendance and behaviour are monitored meticulously and appropriate action taken. This is having a positive impact and both are improving.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The clear vision of the headteacher to make this school outstanding has been communicated well and is shared by other members of staff, senior and middle leaders and by the governing body. The leadership team has put strategies into place which have already had an impact on raising standards and the school is going strongly in the right

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direction. The middle leaders have welcomed opportunities to share and adopt good practice, for example, in tracking progress. Improvement plans are well-focused and include clear timelines and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. The governing body is involved closely with developments. Members gather first-hand evidence to contribute directly to self-evaluation and use their professional expertise to hold the school to account. Representatives attend all parents' and carers' meetings, senior team meetings and staff training events.

Partnerships with other local schools and further education colleges are used effectively to offer a wider range of courses to meet the students' needs. The school's outreach specialist language work in primary schools means that the students are better equipped to study language at Goffs and achieve better results. Links with a partner school have been used creatively to develop more effective management systems and provide support. Clear equalities policies are in place. They are effective because the curriculum is tailored to meet individual needs and any differences in the performance of groups are identified, explained and addressed. Rigorous policies and procedures cover all aspects of safeguarding. These are routinely reviewed, and at the time of the inspection, all safeguarding requirements were meticulously addressed.

The school knows the local community well and has taken some action to promote community cohesion. Some international links have been established through the school's specialist language status, but there are no links to more culturally diverse areas of Great Britain. The school acknowledges that there is more to do in this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Sixth form

The students do well in their courses and achieve above-average results, showing good progress in all subject areas. The teaching is generally good and the teachers demonstrate

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strong subject knowledge. Relationships between the staff and students are formal, but relaxed and contribute strongly to the positive learning atmosphere and ethos of achievement in the sixth form. There are a number of subjects with small class sizes and the management team are aware of the value for money implications of this in their monitoring and evaluation.

The students appreciate the wide range of additional activities on offer through enrichment programmes and voluntary work. For example, one student said 'I enjoyed the cooking and still cook one of the things I was taught'. The advice and guidance given to the students deciding upon entry is outstanding. One innovative approach is to provide potential students with their 'best fit pathway' following their trial ('mock' GCSE) exams in Year 11. This acts as an excellent motivational tool and encourages the students to think carefully about their choices. A further effective tool is the induction tests which check aptitude and 'fit' on entry. These two initiatives have improved retention rates. The monitoring and tracking of students' progress is a strength in the sixth form, as in the rest of the school. Parents and carers receive information on the students' progress derived from six-weekly monitoring, and the staff use this to plan effective interventions where necessary. The leadership and management of the sixth form has had an extremely positive impact on shaping an excellent curriculum, providing challenge to the students and teachers and informing the very good care guidance and support.

These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents and carers returned the Ofsted questionnaire; of these a large majority expressed positive views about the school. Concerns were expressed about the level of parents' and carers' communication with the school and involvement in their children's learning, although a high percentage feel well informed about their children's progress. Inspection evidence shows that recently, there has been an increased volume of communication with parents and carers. However, this has yet to make an impact on their perceptions and the school knows it needs to continue to work with parents and carers on highlighting the different ways of communicating with the school

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Goffs 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 117 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1285 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 37 | 32 | 70 | 60 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 47 | 40 | 65 | 56 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 56 | 48 | 56 | 48 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 32 | 27 | 68 | 58 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 32 | 27 | 67 | 57 | 16 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 34 | 29 | 61 | 52 | 20 | 17 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 27 | 23 | 57 | 49 | 19 | 16 | 0 | 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) | 34 | 29 | 62 | 53 | 13 | 11 | 2 | 2 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 34 | 29 | 64 | 55 | 15 | 13 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 35 | 30 | 63 | 54 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 20 | 17 | 67 | 57 | 22 | 19 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 44 | 38 | 59 | 50 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 48 | 41 | 58 | 50 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 |

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

| | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| Type of school | 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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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.



26 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Goffs School, Waltham Cross, EN7 5QW

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school on 24 and 25 November. We enjoyed talking with you. Goffs is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Shown below are our findings about what is good about your school and what it needs to do to get even better.

Strengths

You make steady progress, succeed well in your examinations and gain good results.

You enjoy the excellent range of different courses you are offered.

You are very well looked after and you feel you are safe in school.

Those of you who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well because of the extra help you get.

The school is well managed and a very good check is kept of how well you are doing. You all know your target grades and are given additional support if you are falling behind.

You enjoy the work you do in practical subjects, and the range of sports, music, art and drama activities provided.

Areas for improvement

Some of you could gain higher grades in your examinations.

The teachers should help you develop better self-presentation and independent learning skills, and mark your books more regularly.

More should be done to enable you to make a greater contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.

Behaviour and attendance have improved and are now both satisfactory, but you could help to make them good by all behaving well all the time and all attending school regularly. We wish all of you success in your studies and thank you once again for your help with this inspection.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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