

# Dagenham Park CofE School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136028
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	360787
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robin Hammerton HMI

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1160
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liam Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Weaver
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2011
<b>School address</b>	School Road Dagenham RM10 9QH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 37 lessons taught by 37 teachers. They observed the school's work, including two assemblies, carried out a detailed scrutiny of students' work, met with staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body and looked at documents including school plans, records, student assessment data and minutes of meetings. They took into account the 213 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those from staff and students.

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

- The effectiveness of the systems designed to improve further the quality of teaching.
- The extent to which recent changes to management systems and structures are improving outcomes for students.
- How closely lessons and the curriculum meet the very varied needs of the students.
- How fully the school evaluates its care, guidance and support for students and how well this aspect enables students to thrive.

## Information about the school

Dagenham Park re-opened as a voluntary controlled Church of England school in January 2010 after the formal closure immediately beforehand of its predecessor school. It is expected to move into a new building, currently under construction, during 2012. It has specialist performing arts status and works in partnership with local schools and colleges in some of its provision for students in Key Stage Four and very extensively in the local sixth form consortium.

The school is average sized and serves an ethnically diverse area. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, and the proportion of students whose first language is not English is well above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average.

**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

Dagenham Park provides a good education for its students as a result of notable recent improvement. There is good capacity to continue improving. Visionary leadership from the senior staff, with excellent encouragement and challenge from governors, has increased the aspirations of and for students, many of whom have a strong desire to achieve well. The school is a highly cohesive, inclusive, outward looking, and increasingly ambitious community. Parents are pleased, with one saying, 'My son is very happy. and is hoping to go into sixth form.'

Students from all groups make good progress. Attainment at GCSE and in the sixth form is rising notably from that in the previous school and is in line with the national average. Staff have responded very well to the strong leadership and good training and support they receive, as well as sensitive support from the church. They show a deep interest in each student's needs and are determined to keep improving their practice. This makes the lessons and broad curriculum enjoyable, challenging and relevant. Students receive outstanding guidance about their options as well as any academic or social needs they have. The caring, focused atmosphere is appreciated by the students, who conform and behave well. One older student for whom English is an additional language summed up the evidence inspectors found by saying, 'It is easy to work hard and succeed here.'

The much-respected headteacher has established clear systems of line management and accountability. Staff know what is expected of them and respond well. The curriculum is very broad, challenging and relevant; it meets closely the diverse needs of students well, with a very wide range of options available. Teaching is good, with many strengths. Most lessons are lively and well paced, and engage all students effectively. Senior staff regularly observe lessons, and this has driven much improvement very well, but they are not always quick enough in checking and following up specific changes some teachers need to make. This means that, for example, although the school has improved well the way that students and staff use assessment information and targets to guide learning, there remain differences in the quality of practice in this area. There are very few examples of teachers providing different or adjusted tasks to meet the specific needs of particular students. The school recognises that further improvement and greater consistency in this area could further enhance students' progress, particularly for those who are higher attaining. The school development plan is a well-constructed living document, with apt priorities linked closely to accurate self-evaluation. However, the success of some specific actions is hard to measure because of its lack of clear criteria related to anticipated outcomes for students.

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

- Help teachers use the school's assessment data to plan more often different tasks in lessons to match the needs of different groups of students, especially, and to begin with, those who are higher attaining.
- Sustain and increase the current good rate of school improvement by
  - including clear success criteria in the school development plan, showing the intended outcomes for students of planned actions
  - using the information gained from lesson observations more effectively and quickly to support all staff in developing their practice in line with whole-school initiatives, thus ensuring all teaching is consistently good or better.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

All groups of students achieve well, given their often low starting points. There is some inconsistency in results between subjects, linked in part to differences in the quality of provision, but no significant underachievement. The school rightly aims to increase further the proportion of students attaining the highest examination grades.

Students' behaviour is good and safe in class, around the school and as they leave at the end of the day. They enjoy school; attendance is increasing and markedly above average. In most lessons, across all subjects, students are attentive, very well engaged and independent, enabling them to progress well. Students from all different backgrounds work supportively together, taking turns, showing respect and helping each other. Increasingly, students are able to reflect sensibly on their learning and identify how to improve, using assessment criteria shared by staff. These common strengths were observed especially clearly in lessons relating to the school's specialism. In Year 7, students loved developing and refining a 'Bollywood' dance together in a mature way. In Year 12 and 13 BTEC performing arts lessons, students supported and constructively criticised each other excellently, under skilled teacher guidance, in producing performances of a very high standard.

Students who join the school with low literacy skills, and those for whom English is an additional language, are well supported in lessons, with key vocabulary being firmly reinforced. The many opportunities for discussion and questioning enable them to progress well across subjects. Students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress by enjoying a focused, often personalised, curriculum. This involves some specialist provision, which meets their particular and broader needs closely.

Students contribute well to the school and wider community, for example through membership of the active school council. They are well aware of moral values and apply these; they mix well with friends from different cultural backgrounds, showing good understanding. The school offers healthy food and opportunities to participate in sport, though does not fully analyse the take up of these. Students are aware of key matters relating to being healthy but they, and some of their parents and carers, identify this as an area needing some further improvement. The school offers many specific opportunities to develop life and work skills, which are well received. Few students leave the school without a place for further study, higher education or training, or an offer of employment.

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*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>	3
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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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?

Teaching across the school is well planned and paced so that it is lively and engaging. Teachers consider carefully how their students can learn best, sharing their ideas together and planning a good range of engaging activities in lessons. Trusting relationships between staff and students ensure a positive atmosphere. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well to challenge and interest students. One student summed this up as follows: 'Most lessons are really fun because the teachers make them interesting.'

This student was careful and right to say 'most', rather than 'all', lessons. Some lessons do not deliver as much as their plans suggest. Here, the teaching is more slowly paced, without sufficient opportunities for students to take an active part, meaning they lose some interest. In a few cases, the activities chosen lack challenge, even though they may be enjoyable, restricting students' opportunities to achieve at the highest level they could. Many teachers have developed very well their use of assessment criteria to help students know their level or grade and their next learning steps. However, this is not consistently effective across the school. Work set is rarely specifically matched to pupils' assessed needs. Nevertheless, in better lessons, teachers often vary questioning and feedback to students skilfully to address their different needs. Marking of students' work is thorough

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but variable in quality. Students do not always have opportunities to respond to teachers' comments.

The curriculum is broad and relevant, containing many academic and vocational options which meet the wide range of needs and aspirations of students well. Much consideration goes into this, with students having their voice heard. For example, currently the status and availability of religious education is being further enhanced so that students will understand better the importance of faith in the world, in line with the school's character. An effective basic literacy programme has been well developed for those needing it. Individual departments plan interesting and broad experiences for each year group, which help students to enjoy the subjects and achieve well. Well-organised external partnerships, such as those with the Royal Ballet and schools in other countries, add much to the students' experience. The school holds the British Council's International Schools Award. It provides an enjoyable range of activities outside school hours but does not systematically analyse patterns of attendance at them.

Students receive excellent personal advice about their options and how to deal with any academic or social difficulties or issues they face. They do not 'slip through the net' or seriously underachieve; instead, they are enabled to continue their learning rapidly. Those who are, or become, vulnerable in some way receive very closely targeted support. Where necessary, their parents and external agencies are involved extremely effectively. 'Buddying' and other systems are well used to re-engage students. When students join the school, at whatever time, they are assessed carefully. If English is not the first language, this assessment focuses on each student's broad attainment, not just any language deficit. Expectations are thus kept high.

*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	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, supported well by his deputy and other senior colleagues, has established a very purposeful vision for the school. It is highly inclusive, with a clear focus on meeting everyone's ambitions equally. This reflects and raises the aspirations of the local community. The outstandingly effective governing body has also contributed much to setting the school on its course. Governors, very well led by a highly knowledgeable and influential chair, understand the diverse local community and its needs. They both challenge and support the school highly astutely on its behalf and have contributed very well to the school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion. They have expectations which, through a very constructive and straightforward partnership with the senior staff, they like to see met.

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Underpinning the vision, the headteacher has established clear management systems. Lines of communication and accountability are clearly defined. Staff at different levels of management say they are clear about the school's purposes and their roles in achieving them. They feel well supported. This is helped by the comprehensive school development plan, a very purposeful document which is regularly reviewed and which drives much of the improvement taking place. It does not contain clear success criteria, however. This means that it is not clear about what specific outcomes for students are intended to be improved by the actions listed.

Through well-organised processes, such as the regular departmental reviews, school self-evaluation is honest and accurate. Senior leaders are aware they could sharpen some aspects of their analysis of data, for example in respect of attendance and student progress, so that any emerging issues are even more closely identified. Senior and middle leaders regularly observe lessons. Their judgements are broadly accurate and, together with training and support for staff, have led to good improvement in the quality of teaching. However, weaknesses, or areas of inconsistency, are not always followed up quickly with the expectation of timely changes in practice. Thus, while the school is improving strongly, pockets of variable or less effective teaching remain.

The school is extending its welcome to parents. Many more now attend parents' evenings and events. Communications are increasingly well established, through letters, texting and the website, for example. Parents are pleased that the school safeguards their children well; all requirements are assiduously met.

*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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form meets a very diverse range of needs and aspirations through the well-developed consortium. Staff go out of their way to ensure that the right courses, at the



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appropriate level, are readily available for all. Failure is rare. If students are not successful at something first time around, staff encourage them to have a fresh start and try again. Thus, retention rates, and those for successful completion of courses, are good.

Students make good progress in the sixth form from their starting points. About three quarters of students who undertake full A level courses progress to university. These facts reflect the good teaching, the enthusiastic and studious participation of students, as well as the strong guidance and support they receive. Students spoken to believe that their learning would benefit if they were trusted to study privately offsite, when appropriate.

Sixth formers take responsibilities within the school, for example by leading paired reading with younger students. Most enjoy the enrichment programme provided, covering a wide range of useful life skills. A good football activity ensured that the participants, some of whom had the possibility of future employment within sport, learned much about the importance of the laws of the game and refereeing.

The sixth form is well led, through the school and consortium. All the schools involved work in very consistent ways, so that, for example, students' attendance at lessons on different sites is readily achievable.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
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	2

**Views of parents and carers**

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was slightly above the national average for secondary schools. Most of those who responded were pleased with the school. A very large majority noted their children's enjoyment, the good teaching, leadership and management and the good progress made by the students. The parents consider too, as do inspectors, that students are well prepared for their futures. They are less convinced that their children are helped to lead a healthy lifestyle, when compared with other outcomes for students. The students completing questionnaires agreed. Some parents and carers said that they would appreciate more information about their children's progress. Inspectors found that senior staff understand this and are making improvements in the way the school informs parents.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dagenham Park CE 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 213 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1160 pupils registered at the school

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	35	125	59	10	5	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	23	134	63	21	10	5	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	77	36	109	51	19	9	6	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	25	135	63	22	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	29	136	64	9	4	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	23	130	61	25	12	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	17	123	58	40	19	8	4
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)	60	28	126	59	14	7	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	19	140	66	21	10	5	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	32	113	53	21	10	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	16	145	68	17	8	8	4
The school is led and managed effectively	61	29	127	60	10	5	7	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	85	40	105	49	10	5	7	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



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13 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Dagenham Park CE School, Dagenham RM10 9QH**

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. It was good to meet with so many of you and be in some of your lessons. We found that your school is fast improving and provides you with a good education.

It was good to see that you make good progress in your courses and that virtually everyone achieves worthwhile qualifications and moves on to something good after leaving the school. This shows you have high and good aspirations for your futures, which the school does much to help you reach. The teaching is good and you receive excellent advice and guidance when you need it, for example when you are choosing from the very wide range of subject options available.

We were really pleased to see you enjoying many interesting lessons. When we looked through your school books, we could see you have worked hard. Sometimes, this work could have been neater, or presented with even more pride. Work on that, as it does matter. In lessons, we saw many of you working independently and in groups, helping each other to learn and giving each other useful feedback. Those are really helpful and good things to be doing. Well done.

The school is led well by the headteacher, staff and governors. They are all committed to doing the very best they can for you. To help them with this, we made these recommendations.

- Senior staff could help teachers more to make sure that all lessons are good and, when making changes in the school, they could be clearer about exactly what these are designed to help you all to achieve or do better.
- Teachers could give different tasks to different groups of you more often in lessons, to match more closely your exact learning needs.

You can help by reflecting carefully, as we often saw you doing, about what level or grade you are working at, and aiming clearly for the next one.

With good wishes for the future

Robin Hammerton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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