

Graveney School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101058
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	354937
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Gill Close HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1911
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	634
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jonathan Oppenheimer
Headteacher	Graham Stapleton
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2007
School address	Welham Road London SW17 9BU
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed 31 lessons taught by 31 teachers, and held meetings with students, staff and members of the governing body. Their observations of the school's work included registrations, assemblies, support sessions and extra-curricular activities. They looked at records of students' attainment and progress, improvement planning, self-evaluation, lesson monitoring documents, policies, the governing body minutes, exclusion data and attendance figures. They also evaluated questionnaire responses from 736 parents and carers and 665 students.

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

- The progress and attainment across year groups of lower prior attainers, students known to be eligible for free school meals, students receiving support through School Action Plus, and students with Black Caribbean or Black African heritage.
- The range of provision in the sixth form and its impact on raising students' progress at AS and A level.
- The effectiveness of the personalisation of the curriculum, support and teaching in meeting students' needs and closing gaps in performance.
- The effectiveness with which leaders at all levels evaluate and improve provision, including teaching, and outcomes.

Information about the school

Graveney is one of the largest secondary schools in the country. Its students have a wide range of ethnic heritages, with three out of every five coming from backgrounds other than White British. A quarter of students speak English as an additional language, a very few of whom are at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the main ones being behavioural, emotional and social needs, moderate learning difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorder. More students than average have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. A higher proportion of students than average remain at the school throughout Years 7 to 11.

The school was designated with specialist status in technology in 1995 and in the Raising Achievement Partnership Programme in 2009. Since the last inspection, it has become an accredited consultant school and a lead school for gifted and talented students. The school is led by a principal and a headteacher.

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

Graveney is an outstanding school. Its excellent balance of nurture and challenge makes a real difference to students' lives by ensuring their achievement is outstanding and that they develop into rounded, confident young people. Parents and carers typically say they are 'incredibly impressed by the education and care' their children have received, that the school 'has been the making' of their children, that its 'supportive philosophy has deeply impacted' on them, and that it has 'allowed our child to maximise their potential'. The atmosphere of friendliness and the exceptional relationships between staff and students, and between students, are apparent in and out of lessons. Students collaborate, help each other, and behave extremely well. They feel exceptionally safe in school and that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the strength of their respect for differences and reflection about values. Students greatly enjoy school and the breadth of opportunities it offers. The outstanding curriculum provides extensive choice, particularly in the sixth form, and is reviewed continuously to match support and courses closely to students' needs. The support for vulnerable students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is excellent in enhancing their access to learning and thereby enabling them to make outstanding progress similar to their peers.

Students attain highly and make outstanding progress as a result of the good teaching and exceptional care and support they receive. The progress they make in lessons is enhanced through the very positive attitudes to work that the school engenders, the wide range of enrichment and support activities, and the careful monitoring of students' advancement towards their targets. This tracking informs interventions that are sensitively tailored to meet students' needs. Nevertheless, there is some variation in the pace of learning and progress in lessons because the quality of teaching varies. Overall it is good, with some being outstanding, but there are occasions when it is satisfactory. In the latter cases, students' needs are not always met well or their progress systematically monitored, activities do not ensure full participation or an emphasis on understanding, and assessment does not involve students frequently enough in making a reasoned evaluation of their understanding or responding to marking that shows them how to improve.

Leaders strive for continued improvement. They use thorough, accurate evaluation to identify areas of relative weakness and inform future planning. The Principal, Headteacher and senior leaders ensure that targets are challenging and that improvements are supported through effective management systems and professional development. This has led to improvements in already strong outcomes in achievement, behaviour and attendance, and the narrowing of gaps between outcomes of groups of students. It has also contributed to a rise in teaching quality, assisted by individual coaching, but sometimes the evaluation of lessons lacks emphasis on students' progress and the areas identified for improvement are not sharp enough to focus future development. The many

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demonstrable improvements and highly effective systems in place show the school's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning in lessons and support sessions so that they are consistently at least good and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that teachers always:
 - meet all students' needs through involving them in engaging activities that challenge and support them and develop their independence
 - use assessment information to plan lessons that set high expectations for students' understanding as well as development of their knowledge and skills
 - monitor systematically each student's understanding throughout lessons and adapt teaching accordingly
 - involve students routinely in identifying evidence of success and assessing their progress towards explicit targets that they understand
 - provide students with clear guidance on how to improve when marking work, then follow up their responses.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In lessons and support sessions, students are very keen to do well. Their concentration is excellent. They work hard and help each other. They are confident about learning from their mistakes and persevering when stuck. Their achievement and enjoyment are outstanding.

The progress that students make between Key Stages 2 and 4 rose significantly in 2010. It was outstanding overall and for most subjects and groups of students. The school's data show continued excellent progress and high attainment for current Year 11 students, as well as across other year groups and for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students join the school with attainment that is above average. By the end of Key Stage 4, their attainment has been significantly and substantially above average in recent years.

Very thorough evaluation of relative weaknesses in performance in a few subjects and by students with low attainment at Key Stage 2 or who are receiving support through School Action Plus has led to changes in provision this year which are already producing improved outcomes. For example, students who are not entered for three separate sciences at GCSE are achieving more highly in science than last year as a consequence of following a course better matched to their needs. Gaps in attainment and progress are narrowing between students overall and groups with Black Caribbean or Black African heritage or known to be eligible for free school meals, although this is faster in some cases than others.

Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community, for example through mentoring younger students and working in a local youth centre. Many students, including those who are vulnerable, take on responsibilities. There is increasing participation in evaluating teaching and learning, but room for even broader involvement with local issues. Attendance has risen this year and is high across groups of students.

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Students' high aspirations, excellent basic skills and involvement in organising activities prepare them exceptionally well for their futures, as is demonstrated by the successful progression to education and employment for all when leaving school. The school promotes healthy lifestyles well, supporting students' physical, mental and emotional well-being and enabling them to understand and make decisions that promote their health. Many students take part in optional physical activity and team sport, but the timetabled core provision in Key Stage 4 is low at one hour per week and the time for optional physical activity in the sixth form clashes with other alternatives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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?

The great majority of teaching is good or better, with some being outstanding. Such teaching inspires and excites students, engaging them actively in extending their understanding through purposeful, interesting and demanding tasks. It develops their independence and creativity using carefully constructed activities, and involves them in discussion and assessment of their own and each other's work through developing a shared understanding of criteria. Teachers know students well, check their progress methodically during lessons and, if they are stuck or make errors, guide them sensitively to overcome difficulties. Teachers use their strong knowledge of their subject and the assessment requirements to explain ideas clearly and model approaches to the work. Where teaching is satisfactory, students acquire knowledge and skills but lessons do not

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challenge or support them all effectively, involve everyone actively or develop understanding and independence well. Each student's understanding is not monitored systematically during lessons by the teacher or through peer or self-evaluation. Students are not given very clear guidance on how to improve in marking or through discussion of evidence for meeting criteria.

The excellent curriculum is continuously reviewed and adapted to meet students' needs. This has led to an increase in vocational pathways at Key Stage 4, which are planned to continue into the sixth form, and an extensive programme of well-targeted individual and small group support. The drive towards a personalised curriculum builds on the four different bands of provision that offer extension to the highest attainers and support to those who need it, between which some degree of movement is possible. There is flexibility providing early entry for GCSE, such as in mathematics where it is followed by entry for additional mathematics and has contributed to high take-up in the sixth form. The wide range of subjects is enhanced by after-school lessons in music, dance, drama, Latin and information and communication technology (ICT), as well enrichment activities including enterprise days, visits and trips. There is an extensive range of very well attended extra-curricular activities. For example, three quarters of Year 10 students are developing their skills and experience by working towards a Duke of Edinburgh award. Parents and carers praise the rich variety and high quality of opportunities in music, and the drama production created and managed by sixth-form students each year.

The outstanding care, guidance and support are real strengths of the school. They reflect its inclusive ethos in providing the climate for everyone to fulfil their potential. Staff generally balance very well the strong discipline and care needed to achieve this. They know the students extremely well and provide them with excellent advice to guide their choice of courses and with outstanding support when they transfer to the next stage of their education. Parents and carers speak highly of the arrangements to help Year 7 students settle in. Support for vulnerable students, such as those who are looked after or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is exemplary. It is achieved through very effective work with families and partner agencies, and carefully targeted support, including mentoring. As a result, achievement, behaviour and attendance have improved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

Leaders share effectively with staff their vision for continued improvement in outcomes through a more personalised curriculum. This has been delivered through improvements in leadership and accountability at all levels, leading to improvements in attainment,

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progress, behaviour and attendance since the last inspection as well as in the specific areas identified at that time. Through working together well and providing coaching, staff have raised the quality of teaching, although opportunities have been missed to evaluate small parts of lessons and support sessions, and to develop self-evaluation.

The governing body is meticulous in ensuring that students and staff are safe; it challenges arrangements and contributes to improvements. It assiduously reviews students' progress and provides a high level of challenge to ensure improvement in provision and outcomes, for example in science. It evaluates its own work, constantly updates its skills and is currently extending its systems for gathering views of parents and carers, students and staff.

Vetting procedures for staff and visitors are exemplary, as are child protection practices, which are reviewed regularly. Safety and the management of risk permeate all aspects of the school, so that students are safe and know how to deal with risk. Issues are acted on rapidly.

The school knows well its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and carries out a wide range of actions across the school and subject areas that promote community cohesion and enable students to communicate with people from different backgrounds locally, nationally and abroad. The school community is exceptionally cohesive and a haven of calm.

Equal opportunity is very actively promoted and discrimination comprehensively tackled, including through a respect code. Effectiveness is evident in the harmonious community and rarity of discriminatory incidents as well as the narrow achievement gaps between students. The school's inclusive approach to evaluation and improvement leads to changes in courses and support that progressively close gaps between groups of students in achievement, attendance, behaviour and exclusion. However, targets for the latter for students with Black Caribbean or Black African heritage are not readily comparable with national figures.

The school is highly committed to working in partnerships that promote well-being and learning. There is substantial impact from its many links with agencies, universities and businesses. Through its two specialisms, it has taken a leading role in providing support in local schools. This has enabled staff to bring back ideas that have improved their practice and to ease students' transition from primary school.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

Students make outstanding progress in the sixth form. Almost all of them go onto higher education, with many entering prestigious universities. Their progress is stronger at A level than at AS level. Students are now making better and more consistent progress across subjects than last year, following more rigorous evaluation, including through students' feedback. The strong progress is achieved by good teaching from mainly experienced sixth-form teachers, together with excellent support. Close tracking of students' progress informs intervention that is planned carefully for any student who falls behind. Students spoken to were full of praise for the help they receive. Care, guidance and support are very strong features and permeate all sixth-form work. Retention rates are high and attendance is good. Behaviour is exemplary and students are very supportive of each other in lessons. Many come from other schools but they all get on very well. Sixth-form students make an extensive contribution to the school and wider community. As one student said, 'there is so much more to the school than lessons', when commenting on the sixth-form drama production in which students are responsible for all aspects.

The curriculum is very broad and flexible; it is responsive to students' needs and provides an excellent range of academic courses and activities. There is good support for students to develop independent learning, research and ICT skills. Leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. There are high expectations which foster the strong and successful drive to improve student outcomes and support the increasingly robust self-evaluation.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

Over one third of parents and carers completed the questionnaire. They gave extremely positive responses. Exceptionally high proportions of parents were happy with their children's experiences at the school and agreed that their children enjoyed school and were kept safe. Similarly, the vast majority agreed that teaching is good, their children made enough progress and they were informed about the progress. A few parents noted instances of less strong teaching, sometimes by temporary teachers. During this inspection, inspectors found that teaching overall is good, with some being outstanding, but there are occasions when it is satisfactory. They identified raising the quality of teaching as the area of focus to underpin the school's further improvement. The very large majority of parents and carers agreed that the school helps their children to have healthy lifestyles and that the school takes account of their views. Nevertheless, a few parents and carers and students were not happy about lengthy queues for healthy options at lunchtime, the range of food available and lack of time spent doing physical activity. Inspectors found that the school promotes a healthy lifestyle well and that many students spend much time engaged in physical activity, but that some Key Stage 4 students do no more than their one hour of timetabled physical education and the opportunity for physical activity in the sixth form is provided when there are other options that restrict take-up. A few parents and carers stated that it was sometimes hard to contact a teacher while some others cited the thorough follow-up of issues they raised. Inspectors found that parents' and carers' views are sought and responded to regularly and that individual matters are pursued effectively, with senior leaders working to identify and minimise any inconsistency.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Graveney 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 736 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1911 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	330	45	373	51	25	3	3	0
The school keeps my child safe	332	45	379	51	17	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	343	47	363	49	22	3	2	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	341	46	355	48	30	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	332	45	365	50	25	3	2	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	218	30	414	56	83	11	2	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	140	19	462	63	93	13	9	1
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)	257	35	378	51	45	6	3	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	257	35	420	57	35	5	3	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	297	40	363	49	43	6	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	189	26	409	56	74	10	11	1
The school is led and managed effectively	331	45	363	49	19	3	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	386	52	320	43	20	3	2	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	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).

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">■ 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.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Graveney School, Tooting, London SW17 9BU

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school and for telling us about it. We found that your school is outstanding. We were impressed by the extremely friendly and harmonious atmosphere, and how well you help each other in lessons. You and your parents and carers told us that you greatly enjoy school and feel very safe. Almost all of you behave extremely well and have high attendance.

You make outstanding progress as a result of the good teaching, excellent care and support, and your own hard work. Staff check carefully how well you are advancing towards your targets and give you excellent support if you are falling behind. You told us that much teaching, but not all, was good or better. We found this to be the case and that sometimes you were not:

- challenged to think hard enough or supported well
- expected to participate actively or develop understanding as well as skills
- involved in discussing and assessing your understanding
- given marking that showed you how to improve.

We have asked the school to improve teaching so that it is consistently good in these areas. You can help by trying hard to understand and by identifying evidence that you have done so.

You have a wide range of courses to choose from and many enrichment activities that you enjoy, particularly music and the drama production organised by the sixth form. Many of you do much sport, but some in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form do less than two hours of physical activity each week.

The principal, headteacher and leaders have brought about improvements in achievement, behaviour and attendance, and have plans for further improvement.

I wish you success at school and in helping it continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector

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