

Sedgehill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100743
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	376444
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Robin Hammerton HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1,410
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara James
Headteacher	Kieran Osborne
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2010
School address	Sedgehill Road London SE6 3QW
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed 43 lessons involving 43 teachers, including four observations made jointly with senior and middle leaders from the school. Inspectors met with staff, students, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, including two assemblies, and looked at documents including minutes of meetings, school plans, evaluations and students' work. They considered confidential questionnaires from staff and students as well as the 184 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- Whether students' attainment in all subjects has improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- Why the science examination results are low.
- How much the outside support helps the school's own leadership to bring improvement.
- How well the school checks and improves learning and teaching.
- How well work in lessons is matched to the needs of all students so that they are challenged to do their best.

Information about the school

This is a large secondary school, with specialist performing arts status. It has a unit for students with hearing impairment. At its last inspection, it was served with a notice to improve because students' progress and achievement were inadequate. Since then, it has established a partnership, or soft federation, with a school from a neighbouring local authority, which provides management support. The executive headteacher is from the partner school; Sedgehill has its own interim headteacher who leads the school from day to day.

The school serves a richly diverse area, with students from many different ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are White British, Black Caribbean and Black African. A higher than average proportion of students speak a first language which is not English, though most such students also speak English well. About twice the average proportion of students are identified as having special educational needs. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school has shown notable improvement in the past year and now provides its students with a satisfactory education.

Strong and encouraging leadership by the interim headteacher and his senior colleagues, guided carefully by the executive headteacher, has galvanised the enthusiasm and commitment of staff at all levels. Staff training and development are well targeted. A teaching assistant spoke for many in saying, 'A vast improvement has been made in the last 12 months; long may it continue!' Consequently, the school has a notable positive buzz, enjoyed by the students.

Teaching, while remaining satisfactory overall, has improved in many key respects. Lessons are well paced and purposeful. There are still, however, inconsistencies in their quality across the school. Students are very well cared for and guided and the curriculum meets most of their needs appropriately. As a consequence, GCSE results in 2011 improved at a much faster rate than the national trend, albeit from a very low point. Attainment remains low nevertheless. The school, through its well-organised tracking data, anticipates further improvement in 2012. Students in Key Stages 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress from their starting points. Sixth-form students' progress has improved and they reach broadly average standards in their courses.

Quite reasonably, senior staff have recently introduced new systems to ensure staff and students know what level or grade each student is working at and towards, which are written on stickers in exercise books and often shown on the whiteboard screens in lessons. However, in many lessons, staff talk about this superficially and repetitively to students. This has the effect of dampening enthusiasm and reducing the effectiveness and pace of otherwise well-constructed lessons. While overall expectations of students have risen, academic targets for individual students and cohorts are not always aspirational, often aiming for progress that is no better than satisfactory. Too often, all students do the same tasks in lessons with only minor adaptations to suit their needs.

Students' behaviour is satisfactory. They are ready to learn, friendly, and often work very well together. They feel safe and secure in school; many contribute well as student ambassadors, for example, or through performing at a good standard in dance, drama and music, which befits the specialism. For most students, attendance

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has risen. However, there remains a large, albeit reducing, core of persistent absentees, who too often gain few, if any, qualifications. For this reason, attendance is low.

Staff and governors evaluate the school accurately. While highlighting the improvements, they are not satisfied with current performance, and are very aware there is much more to do to make the school good. Improvement plans are well carried through. However, senior staff and governors recognise they have focused so heavily on the development areas from the last Ofsted inspection that they left some other key areas, such as science, for future consideration. These aspects have not improved as quickly. Overall, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' academic attainment so that it reaches at least the national average by summer 2013 through:
 - using assessment data and grade or level information in a more sophisticated and carefully chosen way in lessons, so that they better guide students' learning and ensure work is challenging for each student
 - raising further the aspirations for students' progress and ensuring their targets reflect this
 - continuing to improve the consistency of teaching across the school, through closely targeted support and professional development, so it is consistently good by autumn 2012
 - improving provision and outcomes for students in science.
- Reduce persistent absenteeism to an average level at least by autumn 2012 by further close targeting of, and working with, the families concerned.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students join the school with, overall, below-average attainment from their primary schools. Students in all groups are keen to learn and now make satisfactory progress in most lessons and subjects. They usually join in well in individual and shared tasks, taking close account of adults' instructions and advice. They generally show commitment to their learning. However, on some occasions in less demanding lessons, students lose attention, which is not always dealt with by staff. Students contribute well to the school's harmonious community and shared celebrations, indicating their good moral and social development. Some perform at a high standard in musical ensembles, as in Vocalize, the school's award-winning urban

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chamber choir. Students apply their literacy and numeracy skills suitably in many situations, though the presentation of their written work is variable and, too often, untidy. Many students with hearing impairments make good progress because of the well-focused specialist support they receive in and out of lessons and the high expectations made of them. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive caring and suitably targeted support, making the same satisfactory progress as their peers.

Results in GCSE mathematics rose significantly in 2011 after much highly effective work by staff. Those in English were higher than mathematics in previous years but stalled in 2011 and remain notably below the national average. Students’ science work is often at a low level, with over-optimistic teacher assessments. In other subjects, results are variable but generally improving. Students often attain above average results and participation rates in the specialist performing arts subjects, including music.

Exclusions have reduced by a third this year, reflecting behaviour improvements, and there have been no permanent exclusions. Students know the school’s clear expectations of behaviour, outlined in the ‘5 Rs’, well. However, a disproportionately high proportion of boys are sent for time out in the school day, meaning they miss some teaching, although they continue their work. Students’ participation in sporting activity is at a good level but there is a low take-up of the school’s healthy lunches.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

There are several strengths in teaching, seen in many lessons. These include:

- positive relationships between staff and students and among students, leading students to be confident, engaged learners
- the clarity with which lesson objectives are shared by staff so students know what to do and how to be successful
- appropriate pacing with clear structure and development of learning activities
- inclusion of those who speak English as an additional language, who have special educational needs or who are hearing impaired
- the good subject knowledge shown by teachers.

However, there are inconsistencies. In the better lessons, these strengths are used particularly sharply and well, with high expectations, so that students are well motivated and learn rapidly. The less effective lessons sometimes lose focus and challenge, so students reduce their concentration or engage in low-level tasks for the whole or parts of lessons. With a few exceptions, assessment information is used poorly in lessons across the school. Higher attaining students are not always sufficiently challenged. Work is often not clearly matched to students' assessed needs. Teachers repeatedly refer to grades and level descriptors, trying to help students evaluate their work and see how they can reach the next level. However, this is often done as a routine, not because it is needed at the time. Students gain little understanding as the wide-ranging level descriptors, as presented by staff, usually do not relate closely enough to individual tasks in one lesson.

The curriculum is suitably planned and constantly reviewed; it meets increasingly the full range of students' needs. For example, the Baccalaureate system in Year 7 builds on well-established transition arrangements with local primary schools. There is a suitable range of vocational courses increasingly available in Key Stage 4 and, for some students, in Year 9. In the sixth form, lower level courses are being increasingly offered, so that a wider range of students' needs are met. There is a sound range of worthwhile out-of-school-hours activities, which students enjoy and benefit from, though the school does not fully analyse their rates of participation.

Students are cared for and guided very well. Many explain clearly the strong support and impartial advice they receive when making options or considering further or higher education or careers. Staff very effectively meet the needs of students who become particularly vulnerable, or experience emotional difficulties. For example, the school has developed a very close and effective working partnership with specialist teams from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Staff have improved the support and intervention for students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which has helped increase the progress made by these students. The school's effective support for students has begun to reduce the high number of persistent absentees and further decrease the exclusion rate.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The management partnership with the federated school delivers very well. In particular, the executive headteacher provides an experienced and level-headed presence which effectively supports the interim headteacher in leading the school with commitment, vision and enthusiasm. This energy transmits clearly to all staff. Middle and senior leaders have appropriate roles and make valuable and increasing contributions to school improvement. Students and parents are pleased with the changes made.

Senior and middle leaders are keenly aware of the school's strengths and most of its improvement needs. They are committed to tackling weaknesses. Many areas needing development are addressed well. In mathematics, leadership and teaching expertise from the head of the performing arts specialist area helped raise standards. A well-targeted approach to staff training has brought key improvements in teaching across the school. Senior and middle leaders carry out regular lesson observations and evaluate the lessons broadly accurately, identifying appropriate areas for development which are then followed up and checked. However, the proportion of inadequate teaching and learning observed by inspectors was higher, and the proportion of good teaching and learning lower, than that indicated by the school. School leaders recognise that they now need to tackle some weaknesses more quickly and that the use of assessment information by staff in lessons requires much further work.

Equalities take a high profile in school self-evaluation. This shows that some student groups are over represented in exclusions, especially those identified with special educational needs, which the school is working successfully to reduce. No student groups achieve notably less well than others in examinations. Relationships with parents and carers are carefully developed and are positive with reasonable attendance at parents' evenings and events. The school website is informative and frequently updated, but parents and carers have only a limited role in school decision-making.

The good safeguarding procedures are used in some cases as a model for other

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schools and help students feel safe. The school’s community cohesion plan is based on a clear analysis and has good influence on the curriculum. Governors contribute appropriately to these areas and all their statutory responsibilities are properly met. They are becoming increasingly challenging in their questioning and receive useful and accurate information from senior staff.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Sixth form

New leadership, and external consultancy advice, have led to some changes in direction in the sixth form, including sensible adjustments to partnerships with other schools and Lewisham College. The curriculum is in the early stages of being broadened, with a wider range of courses becoming available, which better suit the full range of students’ needs. Students continue to make satisfactory progress in A-level courses, reaching broadly-average standards. As in other year groups, students receive very well-honed personal guidance and many enjoy taking responsibility in the school.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving as a result of increased monitoring and support. It has several strengths, including promoting independent learning. For example, in a good A-level art lesson, the teacher ensured students could each apply creatively, previously taught specialised skills. Students could explain confidently the technical and emotional aspects of their work and produced striking self-portraits.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires are mainly pleased, saying their children enjoy school, make enough progress and receive good teaching. They like the accessibility and helpfulness of staff about academic matters or if there are ever any problems such as bullying. They are less satisfied, however, with the school’s promotion of healthy lifestyles for students than any other area. The inspection evidence supports parents’ views; the school has improved much in the last year, so that students enjoy being there and their progress is now satisfactory. Some parents, while supportive of the school in general, make fair critiques. One wrote, ‘I feel that my son has the knowledge to learn, and a little effort gives him good results, but he doesn’t seem to get the push to do this.’ This reflects accurately the school’s need to raise further its aspirations for students.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sedgehill 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 184 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,410 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	40	99	54	8	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	72	39	103	56	8	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	82	45	94	51	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	32	108	59	11	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	34	110	60	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	60	33	105	57	12	7	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	28	107	58	19	10	2	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)	63	34	97	53	4	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	63	34	106	58	5	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	38	97	53	11	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	32	105	57	7	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	68	37	108	59	4	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	77	42	98	53	4	2	1	1

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



November 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Sedgehill School, London, SE6 3QW

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. It was good to meet so many of you and see you at work. We also enjoyed with you the inspiring views across London from the school.

We are pleased to tell you that we found your school now gives you a satisfactory standard of education, after receiving a notice to improve a year ago. This is good news and reflects all the hard work and improvement that many of you and your parents told us about. Lessons have become better and the progress you make is faster. You are very well cared for in school and staff are ready to help you to sort out any problems that occur. Well done to all of you who are student ambassadors, prefects, members of choirs, sports players and so many other roles that make the school a stronger community. It was great to see all of this.

Your teachers, senior staff and governors know, however, there is still much more to do to make the school better. We discussed these things with them in detail. To help this, we have asked them to work on these areas.

- Use much better the assessments made of your work, and the grades, levels and targets teachers share with you, so that you are all challenged in your learning, know how well you are doing and what you should do next.
- Improve the teaching so that is consistently at least good in all lessons.
- Improve the provision in science so that results are better in the subject.
- Reduce the number of you who miss too much school.

By doing these things, we hope the school can reach at least average standards, especially at GCSE, by 2013. You can all help by continuing to work hard, joining in actively in all lessons, checking you understand your targets and asking if you are not sure. Do make sure you attend school on time every day and remember to do your work tidily so that it shows your pride in it. That is important too.

Yours sincerely
Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector

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