

Dagenham Park CofE School

School Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 9QH

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over time, students' achievement has been inconsistent. In many respects standards have remained below average.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs and students from White British backgrounds requires improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning do not give sufficient consideration to the achievement of different groups of students.
- The school's leaders believe that teaching is good, but they have not taken sufficient account of the impact of teaching on students' achievement.
- Students are not always set work that helps all of them to learn well.
- Expectations of what students can achieve are not always high enough. The most-able students are not suitably challenged in all lessons.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. Where marking is weaker, sometimes students do not know what they need to do in order to improve.
- Improvement plans for English, mathematics and science do not identify or measure the improved progress of different groups.
- Governors do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for the achievement of all groups of students.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C has risen since the last inspection and is broadly average.
- The headteacher and senior team are committed to improving the school.
- The achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium is improving.
- Reading is promoted well across the school.
- Students' behaviour is good. Attendance is above average. Students are safe in school.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress in work-related courses and their academic achievement is improving.
- A broad range of experiences in and out of school helps students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team made observations of teaching and learning in 44 lessons. Of these, nine were visited jointly with members of the school’s leadership team.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, students, and a representative from the local authority.
- There were 82 responses to the staff questionnaire which were analysed by the inspection team.
- A range of documents was examined, including the school’s self-evaluation and strategic plans, records of teaching observations made by the school and the local authority, students’ achievement data, attendance records, the minutes of governing body meetings and students’ work.
- Inspectors took into account the very few responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors visited the school on 12 February 2014 to gather additional evidence, including further scrutiny of documentation and visits to 10 lessons to look at students’ work.

Inspection team

Thomas Packer, Lead Inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Clifford Walker	Additional Inspector
Colin Mackinlay	Additional Inspector
Karen Roche	Additional Inspector
Richard Boswell	Additional Inspector
Kekshan Salaria	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Carmen Rodney	Her Majesty’s Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It has a performing arts specialism. More students than usual join the school at different times of the school year.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for students known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and students with a parent in the armed services, is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher than the national average. The largest ethnic groups include students of White British heritage, those from any other White background and those from African descent.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is significantly higher than the national average.
- The school is one of four schools in the Southern Consortium. These schools work together to provide sixth-form education in the area.
- A few Year 11 students attend Barking and Dagenham College for catering courses.
- The school runs an on-site, specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs, known as The Base. This provides support for up to 30 students with moderate learning difficulties. Most of these students also have medical needs. At the time of the inspection, 26 students were on the roll.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is all at least good by making sure that teachers:
 - make more effective use of assessment information to plan lessons
 - help all students fulfil their potential by ensuring that the tasks they set are better matched to students' levels of skills and knowledge
 - raise their expectations of what students can achieve and the amount of work that they complete
 - provide greater challenge for the most-able students so that more achieve the highest GCSE grades
 - mark work to a consistently high standard so all students understand how they can improve.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the school's leaders closely monitor and analyse the progress of all groups of students
 - paying particular attention to all aspects of the achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs and students from White British backgrounds
 - improving the quality of middle leaders' improvement and strategic planning so that it has a much sharper focus on what needs to be done to raise standards
 - ensuring that governors hold senior leaders firmly to account for the achievement of all groups of students.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance should be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with below-average standards. In many aspects, their levels of attainment are still below average when they leave. In 2013, students were around half a grade below average in English and mathematics; GCSE results in English literature were low in 2012 and 2013. Across all GCSE subjects, too few students achieve grades A* and A.
- Students from White British backgrounds and those who speak English as their first language make significantly less progress than their peers. In mathematics, students eligible for pupil premium funding were a third of a grade lower than other students in 2013.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is slower than that of other students. Students who attend The Base make variable progress.
- The school predicts that the progress of students currently in Year 11 will be much better than in 2013. However, for some groups, particularly those from White British backgrounds and those with disabilities or special educational needs, this is still below what could be expected of them given their attainment in primary school. Too many remain well below their targets.
- In English, the achievement gap between students eligible for pupil premium funding and others has closed. In 2013, eligible students were a quarter of a grade higher than other students in English.
- In 2012 and 2013, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics was broadly average. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Students of African descent and those from any other White background did particularly well.
- In 2013, the number of students taking religious education at GCSE rose dramatically. However, fewer than a third of all students studied for two or more science GCSEs. The school is making changes to the curriculum to ensure that, in future, fewer students will take BTEC science qualifications and more will take GCSE courses.
- Students attending the catering courses at Barking and Dagenham College achieve good results.
- The school enters some of its students early for GCSEs in English and mathematics. At least half of these students attain grades C or above. In mathematics they are entered for additional mathematics which prepares them well for A level.
- Students enter the sixth form with levels slightly below those found nationally. In vocational subjects the students achieve well; results at A and AS levels show steady improvement. Overall, sixth-form students make the progress expected of them given their prior attainment at GCSE. The number of students going on to study at university when they leave school has risen dramatically.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not all groups of students make consistently good progress.
- Teachers' expectations of students are not always high enough. For example, lesson activities are sometimes too slow, or not always sufficiently matched to the ability or interests of students, so that they become disengaged. This is particularly the case for some of the most-able students who sometimes feel that work is too easy.
- Most staff give students useful guidance on how to improve their work. However, in a minority of books seen, students' work had been scarcely marked with little or no indication of what they needed to do to make progress. In a few cases students ignore advice, and this is not followed up by the teacher.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in lessons. They are an integral part of the lesson

and provide good support.

- Students make good progress when teachers' expectations are high. Teachers plan lessons carefully, drawing on their good understanding of their subjects. In these cases, teaching proceeds at a rapid pace, although teachers also ensure that adequate time is provided for students to reflect and refine their understanding.
- When teaching is good, students settle to tasks well and are ready to learn. Staff have productive relationships with students, give well-deserved praise and take a close interest in how well they are doing. Students feel that their work is valued and they feel supported.
- In the sixth form, teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and their enthusiasm enables students to enjoy their learning. In one English lesson students were studying *Paradise Lost* in a Biblical context. Students were challenged to think about their personal beliefs as well as researching complex literary images.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. Students said that they are very pleased with the selection of books they have to choose from and said how much they enjoy reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of students is good, both in lessons and around the school.
- Students get along well with each other and are respectful of each other's backgrounds and differences. Students present themselves with confidence and maturity. Those appointed as school ambassadors said that they enjoy the role that they play in school life. Students said that they value the harmonious and diverse atmosphere of the school.
- In lessons students enjoy learning when the teaching is of high quality. In lessons where teaching is not as effective, a few incidents of low-level disruption occur. Students become disengaged and their behaviour has to be corrected by staff.
- Students' attendance is improving and is above the national average. The school has worked hard to promote good attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- The school's procedures for dealing with the rare instances of poor behaviour are highly effective. Students said that the sanctions are applied consistently. Fixed-term and permanent exclusions are very rare.
- In the sixth form, students have a positive attitude to their learning, inspired by their teachers. They are involved with the rest of the school, in particular working with younger students as mentors and with Year 11 as role models.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school site is secure. Students are well supervised and staff are meticulous in relation to safety. Students are safe and they know whom to talk to if they encounter a problem. They know that any issues or concerns are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- The majority of students, including those in The Base, said that racist or homophobic bullying is rare. They said that if any form of discriminatory bullying occurs it is dealt with thoroughly and quickly. Students have an excellent understanding of how to report instances of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good. There are many opportunities for multi-faith reflection; students are respectful of cultural and religious diversity.. Students explained how this helped them to see 'a bigger picture than themselves'. Assemblies are thought provoking. The student council, the debating club and peer mentoring all contribute to students' moral development.
- Sixth-form students with a keen interest in science enjoy opportunities to keep up to date with scientific discoveries. For example, young physicists visited the European Organisation for Nuclear Research unit to learn about the renowned British scientist who discovered the 'God particle'. Students' awareness of their literary and artistic heritage develops through World Book Day and visits to the Chelsea School of Art. Similarly, theatre companies are used to increase students' grasp of moral issues, for example a Year 7 forum which examined cyber bullying through

theatre.

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Senior leaders' evaluation of the school is not sufficiently thorough and accurate. Inspection evidence does not support the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness is good.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is not analysed in enough depth. These students do not achieve as well as they could and this weakens the argument that equality of opportunity is good.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are highly visible around the school and are committed to improving the school. They demonstrate high personal standards for behaviour and lead by example. They have set higher targets each year for teaching and students' achievement. However, middle leaders' plans for improvement lack rigour. They are not focused enough on improving outcomes and do not differentiate sufficiently between groups of students. Milestones and timelines are unclear, and evaluation is not thorough. Furthermore, although the need to improve teaching is identified in some plans, it is not clear how this will be achieved.
- Senior leaders assess the quality of teachers' work regularly but do not give enough consideration to the impact that teaching has on students' achievement.
- The process of setting targets for teachers is well structured. Clear links are made between the training and development of staff, their personal objectives and pay progression. The process is scrutinised by the governing body. Newly-qualified teachers feel well supported by the leadership team.
- In September 2013, the school introduced a new system to monitor students' progress. This system has produced data to help the school identify how well students are doing. Leaders are producing profiles for every student and half-termly meetings assess students' progress and help determine the support and intervention needed. However, these measures are not always sufficiently well targeted or evaluated robustly enough.
- Students with special educational needs and White British students are now given more intensive support and as a result the progress of both these groups in literacy is improving. However, it is too soon to analyse the full impact of this work.
- A sharp focus on using the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding to develop students' literacy skills is helping to close remaining gaps in achievement.
- Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure that it serves the interests of students as well as possible. Recently the teaching time for English and mathematics in Key Stage 3 has been increased while, in Key Stage 4, the changes from BTEC courses to GCSE are providing students, in particular those with additional needs, with more challenge. Language teaching has been given greater emphasis, which has given the curriculum more breadth. These changes have been welcomed by students.
- The well-established, sixth-form consortium receives strong direction from its principal. Sixth-form students are well placed for the next stage of their education or for employment or training. This is because of good quality pastoral and academic care that includes relevant work experience, structured careers advice and a rigorous monitoring and assessment process.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Staff are fully trained in child protection and procedures for recruiting staff are robust. All are aware of how and to whom they should report concerns. The outcomes for students attending Barking and Dagenham College are monitored regularly. All statutory requirements are met.
- Local authority officers make regular, extended visits to the school. These visits contribute to the school's monitoring of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a range of expertise. They manage the financial resources of the school efficiently with the result that it is well resourced.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has been in post for three months and has undergone

training to enable her to manage her role. She understands the school's strengths and weaknesses and knows that her role should provide senior leaders with both support and challenge. However, governors do not always challenge leaders sufficiently about the achievement of different groups of students because they do not give enough consideration to all the available data. This means that the school is not always held fully to account.

- The governors allocate the pupil premium funding and review the overall progress of this group. However, they do not evaluate the effectiveness of the various strategies that the school has put in place to support these students.
- Safeguarding is taken extremely seriously by the governing body. The school's safeguarding procedures are regularly monitored.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136028
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	440440

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
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	1,261
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Penny Sayer
Headteacher	Simon Weaver
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2011
Telephone number	020 8270 4400
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