

Deptford Green School

Edward Street, New Cross, London, SE14 6AN

Inspection dates 1-2 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There is not yet enough good teaching and too little is outstanding. Where teaching requires improvement it is usually because the work does not offer enough challenge to all of the most able students.
- Many students are making more rapid progress in science, English and mathematics, but the progress of some less able students is not good enough, especially those with weaker literacy skills.
- The new literacy policy is starting to make a difference, but it is not yet fully implemented in all subjects.
- Students supported through school action plus do not attend as regularly as their peers.
- Disabled students or those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action plus do not make as good progress as their peers. Their achievement over time still lags behind some of the good achievement now emerging in the school.
- In some lessons, teaching is not supporting less able students to develop the better understanding of topics, core concepts and skills they need in order to make good progress.
- A small number of students are not approaching their work with similar positive attitudes to their peers.
- A minority of middle leaders are not incisive enough in checking that the long- and short-term plans for subjects are setting good challenge to all students.

The school has the following strengths

- The excellent senior leadership team provides determined, well-focused leadership and it is securing a strong trajectory of improvement. The members have turned the school around. The governance by the interim executive board is highly effective.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very good. Students respect difference and bullying is not tolerated.
- Most students behave well around the school and in their lessons.
- Students talk with pride about how much their school has changed for the better. They feel leaders really value their ideas.
- Engagement with parents has improved rapidly. Parents are now well informed about developments at the school.
- The welfare and pastoral support of all students are a significant strength. The most vulnerable students are supported very well to enjoy learning.
- The sixth form is good.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected in January 2013 and was judged to require special measures because the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. After the inspection in January 2013 an executive headteacher and interim executive board (IEB) were appointed to lead improvements at the school. Since January 2013 the school has received four monitoring inspections, the fourth being this inspection. This inspection began as the fourth monitoring inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At the end of the first day it converted to become an inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 and evidence from the first three monitoring visits was used to inform the judgements on this inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons, including some short visits to look at students' books. Fourteen observations were conducted jointly with senior and middle leaders. Observations did not include the sixth form as there are no classes currently in the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a member of the IEB, a group of parents, a representative from the local authority and a group of staff. Inspectors spoke with students during lunch and break times and, on the second day of the inspection, met with two groups of students.
- The school's action plans, self-evaluation documents, policies for safeguarding students and monitoring records of teaching were scrutinised. The school's data about current students' achievement were reviewed and the lead inspector read the minutes of the meetings of the IEB.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the online Parent View survey, considered the school's own feedback obtained from parents, and a meeting took place between some parents and an inspector.

Inspection team

Joanna Beckford-Hall, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Cox	Her Majesty's Inspector
Liz Duffy	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school, with a very small sixth form.
- The school is currently not recruiting to the sixth form. There are no students in Year 12 and students in Year 13 had finished their examinations at the time of the inspection.
- The student population is ethnically very diverse and the percentage of students who speak English as an additional language is well above that found nationally.
- The proportion of disabled students or those who have special educational needs, and are supported at school action, is below that found nationally. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well above average. The funding is for children in the care of the local authority and students known to be eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.
- A lot of students join the school after the start of Year 7, and leave the school before the end of Year 11.
- The school has a local authority resourced unit for students with special educational needs. This is managed by the school's inclusion team and provides additional support for these students.
- A small number of students study vocational courses at Lewisham College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all is at least good, and more is outstanding, by:
 - ensuring that teaching in all departments stretches the more able and strongly supports those students who may occasionally struggle with their learning
 - making sure teaching closes quickly the remaining gaps in the progress of boys and girls
 - making sure that teaching is well planned so that all disabled students or those who have special educational needs make good progress
 - developing further the skills of middle leaders to give succinct feedback to staff, identifying strengths and areas needing improvement in their teaching.
- Improve the attendance of students supported through school action plus.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Not enough of the most able students are making good progress to attain the higher grades of A* and A grades for GCSE courses. In some year groups, there are pockets where there remain gaps in the achievement of boys and girls. Senior leaders are tackling this through incisive monitoring and setting realistic targets to close these gaps.
- Students join the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. From their starting points, a higher proportion of students is now making expected progress in English and mathematics. Leaders ensured that significant weaknesses in science and mathematics were tackled and, in Key Stage 3, progress is improving quickly.
- In 2013, the proportions of students making expected, and better than expected, progress in English remained above that found nationally. Students' progress in mathematics was below the national average. The mathematics team, many of whom are new, took swift action and achievement in mathematics is now improving. This year, 72% of Year 11 are on track to attain A* to C grades in GCSE mathematics, a significant improvement from 2013.
- Students' achievement in science was inadequate. Better leadership and teaching are now turning around previously poor teaching. Consequently, most students enjoy science more; there is more time devoted to practical work and marking is improving. Students understand how to record their results from experiments and make links in their scientific knowledge across different topics.
- Disabled students or those who have special educational needs, including those from the specialist resource base, are starting to make better progress and achieve well in lessons and over time. The work of teaching assistants is improving because well-planned training is helping them to develop their understanding of how to meet individuals' needs in lessons. They are now supporting students' learning much better, and not simply doing the work for them.
- The progress of students supported through school action plus is not as good as it should be. This is because their attendance is not as good as their peers and work is not always pitched at the right level for them.
- The achievement of the high proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is continuing to improve. In 2013, they made better progress in mathematics and English than their peers. They often receive good support. Sometimes their needs are not always met well because teachers assume they have more knowledge than they do. Occasionally, they are unable to read with meaning and grasp what they are supposed to learn.
- The school is using the additional pupil premium funding to good effect. The gaps in achievement for these pupils compared with their peers are closing rapidly. Intensive work with eligible students in Year 11, this year, has helped these students catch up. They are set to achieve better than their peers in attaining five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics. In Key Stage 3, the progress of students eligible for this funding is improving strongly.
- Students who receive support from the Year 7 catch-up funding are gradually doing better in their numeracy and literacy work. Interventions are planned well with more with more attention to their individual needs.
- Students who attend alternative provision at Lewisham College achieve well. Leaders monitor their progress and attendance. They sustain good links with the college to check that courses are meeting the needs of these students.
- The sixth form provided good teaching and enabled the 20 students to make good progress in their A-level and International Baccalaureate course this year. All students have plans to progress to university, further study or employment.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because there is little that is outstanding and not enough that is consistently good. Leaders have eradicated inadequate practice.
- In teaching that requires improvement the pace is often too slow and the learning is not planned well enough to ensure that students can regularly apply, revisit and develop their knowledge. The depth of understanding in some physical education and humanities classes is lacking and teachers do not check students' understanding then adapt their teaching quickly enough.
- Not all teaching develops students' literacy and oracy skills well enough throughout the whole curriculum. The very best teaching quickly helps students extend their spoken English and vocabulary, but weaker teaching fails to pick up that students are not reading for meaning.
- Improvements to planning, teaching and marking in mathematics and science are ensuring that most teaching in these subjects is good. This is helping students to make much better progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. There is some outstanding teaching in art, textiles, and design and technology. Sequences of lessons are planned carefully to capitalise on students' previous knowledge. Work is pitched at the right level for the wide range of ability, helping students to develop their practical skills quickly. They are challenged and use theoretical knowledge to underpin their practical work. Students enjoy and achieve very well in these subjects. High quality work is displayed throughout the school to celebrate their success.
- Students are not engaging well enough in some language lessons and are not ambitious enough about improving their work. In a Spanish class observed, some students' books were messy and students had work that had not been completed. In contrast, some good French teaching challenged students to listen and respond to instructions in French. The teacher then persevered with encouraging the less confident students to develop their speaking skills. They made good progress and their written work bore evidence of their keen interest, care and good attitudes to learning.
- Marking is improving, but some inconsistency remains. Marking can, at times, be scant; this fails to stretch students' subject knowledge. Where marking is good, the 'next-steps' and detailed comments guide students to reflect critically on their work. They acquire additional knowledge through homework and use this to extend their class work. Inspectors saw good examples of this in English, textiles and French.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. This is because not all students, especially the less able students, have developed keen attitudes to all aspects of their study. A few still do not care about how they present their work. They do not catch up with work they have missed and a small minority of less able students do not apply themselves well enough in lessons.
- Students confirm that behaviour around the school and in lessons has improved significantly. Staff enforce high expectations for students' conduct and smart dress code. Most students respect the new behaviour policy and understand how senior leaders and the heads of house use the rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour.
- Most students attend regularly and overall attendance for the school is average. Nevertheless, the attendance of disabled students or those with special educational needs supported through school action plus, and some students who benefit from the pupil premium funding, is not good enough. This hinders their progress. Punctuality is much better and students need less coaxing to get to lessons.
- Improved behaviour has led to a significant reduction in the percentage of students who are excluded for short periods. The reduction in fixed-period exclusions is also testimony to good pastoral care and welfare support, helping students resolve differences and get on well together.
- In most lessons, students engage well with their work. In teaching that lacks challenge, a few students switch off, are bored and occasionally try to interrupt the teacher. Teachers handle this situation quickly and deflect interruptions by giving additional help to students who lose

concentration. This is rare and other students are quick to reprimand those who try to interrupt.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students understand how to keep themselves safe outside of school and on the internet. They agree that the school building is secure. Through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons, students develop a good understanding of the dangers of cyber bullying. If concerns arise, they know they can talk to pastoral leaders to get advice quickly.
- Students get on well with each other and they respect difference. They learn about all forms of bullying and have a good understanding of the negative impact of racist or homophobic language. This is very rare and leaders take swift and firm action to deal with any kind of bullying. Discrimination is not tolerated and students have a good 'moral compass' to guide their actions.
- A culture of respect exists. Students say that fighting has stopped; running along corridors is not tolerated. Students feel their views are valued.
- Parents rightly judge that behaviour and safety have improved and that routines and high expectations are well established. They feel their children are safe, and that leaders work hard to ensure consistency in using the behaviour policy.
- The good quality pastoral care and support for vulnerable students is a strength of the school's work. It is supporting much better engagement with parents, better behaviour and improving attendance of most students.

The leadership and management are good

- Through his unwavering commitment, and determined and ambitious leadership, the executive headteacher has led his staff and other senior leaders through the journey out of special measures. Staff, students and parents praise his leadership.
- Parents are very pleased with the impact of the Parent Forum Group, which works closely with the IEB and senior leaders. They have helped to ensure that newsletters for parents are interesting and informative.
- Through clear action planning, the sharing of an ambitious vision and a sound balance of challenge and guidance, staff have been very well supported to improve the school. Staff told inspectors they feel valued, well informed, listened to and well led by senior leaders. A culture of trust and shared values exists. Staff can share best practice and tackle issues without harsh criticism from leaders.
- As a result of well-planned training for better lesson planning and teaching, better use of achievement data and work with teaching assistants, the quality of teaching is improving continually. Improving the quality of teaching to be consistently good every day, in every subject and over time, is rightly given the highest priority.
- The coaching programme helps staff improve their practice and find ways to plan work at different levels best suited to students they teach. Most are becoming more confident in measuring their students' achievements against expectations nationally.
- Heads of department are increasingly confident about pinpointing which aspects of teaching in their departments need improving, and why. Their scrutiny of students' work, observations of teaching, and individual meetings with teachers are helping them to understand strengths and identify areas needing further work. Their curriculum reviews are increasingly sharp and are starting to give more insightful analysis of students' achievement and where gaps remain. However, some work scrutiny records are not yet reporting well enough about the depth of students' subject knowledge over time. The quality of the teachers' feedback in some subjects is not developing students' knowledge well enough.
- Middle and senior leaders undertake joint observations of teaching. They focus on students' attitudes in lessons as well as the level of challenge students receive. While leaders' judgements concurred with those of inspectors, some middle leaders are not crisp enough in giving short focused feedback about strengths and areas needing development. Some middle leaders would benefit further from seeing senior leaders give difficult feedback to staff.

- The impact of middle leaders' work to tackle issues in teaching literacy and ensuring that more able students have sufficient challenge is variable. The quality of curriculum planning to build in opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy across Key Stages 3 and 4 is not good enough in some subjects. Weak literacy is a hurdle for some students, and not all short-term and longer-term subject plans are addressing this quickly enough.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students benefit from an array of sports, arts and enrichment activities that develop team and leadership skills, creativity and confidence.
- The new performance management system is used well to reward excellence and tackle underperformance. Staff have clear targets linked to the Teachers' Standards and the priorities in the school development plan. They understand how decisions about progression and pay are made.
- The local authority's work has been well focused, has addressed key priorities, and has been appropriately challenging. Through regular monitoring meetings and work with the school improvement advisers, leaders are held to account for improving the sixth form, teaching across the school and narrowing gaps in students' achievement. The partnership work brokered with Conisborough College and Grinling Gibbons School has supported successfully the development work for transition between Years 6 and 7, and better teaching and leadership in the science and mathematics departments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The three members of the interim executive board (IEB) achieve a good balance of challenge and support in their work with the school's leaders. Their educational expertise and experience ensure that they ask insightful questions about improvements to teaching, how quickly gaps are closing in students' progress and how well middle leaders are developing their skills. They understand how the use of the pupil premium funding is closing the gaps in students' achievement. They know that the attendance and achievement of disabled students and some of those who have special educational needs needs improving.
 - The IEB knows the school well. Its assessment of where weaknesses remain is accurate. The members are forensic in checking the data about students' achievements and are robust in holding senior and middle leaders to account. Their intense scrutiny of the quality of work in science and mathematics, and the rolling programme of curriculum reviews, means that each department leader is under detailed review. The IEB makes certain that performance management eradicates weak leadership and ineffective teaching and is used appropriately to help those who show the potential to improve their practice. As a result, the IEB and senior leaders have taken tough decisions about staffing and have made certain that staff know why they may or may not progress up the salary scale. The IEB and senior leaders have tackled the findings from each of the monitoring inspections quickly. The IEB has sustained regular communication with the local authority and senior leaders to test out improvements at the school against the targets in the school action plans, frequently updated as priorities change.
 - The IEB has made sure that procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Processes for safe recruitment and the vetting of staff are robust.

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	100740
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	441507

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	849
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Mr Steve Belk
Headteacher	Mr Robert Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2013
Telephone number	02086913236
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