

Saint Gabriel's College

Brooke Site Langton Road, London, SW9 6UL

Inspection dates 13 – 14 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The governing body, school leaders and the new Principal have high ambitions for the students and the school.
- Their decisive actions since September 2014 have already had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning at the school, particularly in mathematics.
- As a result, students' progress across all subjects and year groups is good. This is particularly true in mathematics, where students' gaps in knowledge have had to be filled quickly.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is seen as a high priority and permeates school life.
- Students show the highest levels of respect and tolerance towards each other; they are well spoken, and demonstrate confidence and maturity.
- The school has the highest expectations regarding students' conduct and behaviour around the school site. As a result, students behave courteously, are proud of their school and attend regularly.
- Student leadership is strong. Student prefects are respected and play a significant role in the day-to-day running of the school. They mentor and support younger students, supervise recreational areas and give advice. Students are given a powerful voice in the school's development through the school council and the Leading Ladies programme.
- Pastoral care is very effective. Students are well supported and feel very safe in their mixed-age learning communities. They see the school community as 'a family'.
- The site is secure and the school's procedures for keeping students safe are robust.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, work set for the most able is not sufficiently challenging. This is particularly the case for the growing number of very able students in Years 7 and 8.
- While there are a number of extra-curricular opportunities for students, they are not as regular or varied as they could be.
- While the school has introduced a consistent approach to marking, sometimes, students are not given time to make improvements to their work.
- Although there has been significant improvement in the teaching of mathematics, students are not consistently encouraged to use these numeracy skills across other subjects.
- There are still some inconsistencies in the quality of homework that is set for students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons, of which 13 were jointly observed with senior leaders. They also made a number of shorter visits to seven lessons, an assembly, small group sessions and extra-curricular groups.
- Groups of students from all key stages met with inspectors. Meetings were also held with a range of senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff, governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation and statistical information about the progress and performance of the school. Inspectors scrutinised and examined the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered 92 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaires from 31 members of staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Gutmann	Additional Inspector
Andrew Cooper	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Saint Gabriel's College is a much smaller than average sized Church of England secondary school, within the diocese of Southwark.
- The new Principal has been in post since September 2014.
- Over two thirds of students are girls. Boys were admitted for the first time in September 2012 and are currently in Years 7 to 9.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children who are looked after and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average, over half the school's population.
- The majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost half the students speak English as an additional language which is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- A large number of students were entered early for their mathematics GCSE last year.
- No students attend an off-site provision.
- 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?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement by ensuring that:
 - work set in lessons and for homework is suitably challenging, particularly for the most able
 - students are given appropriate time in class to make improvements to their work following feedback from the teacher
 - teachers encourage students to use their mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Strengthen provision at the school further by:
 - ensuring that opportunities for students outside of lessons are wide and enriching
 - ensuring that the school meets the social, emotional and academic needs of boys as they move into Key Stage 4.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The governing body, school leaders and new Principal have high ambitions for both the school and students. They have a clear vision for the school and an effective school improvement plan that identifies key priorities. They have appointed some strong middle and senior leaders, who in a very short time have already had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics.
 - The effective way that school leaders, staff and student leaders work harmoniously together means that the school community understands the vision for the school. This partnership has created a set of values and beliefs that support the school's priority of promoting students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
 - Very good relationships are fostered between all members of this inclusive school community and the wider community through initiatives such as London Citizens and Young Lambeth Cooperative. Students show an understanding of fundamental British values, developed for example through their efforts to achieve student leadership roles and their active participation in campaigns about local issues such as the London Living Wage.
 - Students understand the diverse nature of their school, particularly in terms of religious beliefs, and show respect and tolerance. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated by either students or teachers. As a result, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
 - The curriculum and school guidance prepare students well for the next stage of education, with a much higher than average proportion of students achieving the English Baccalaureate. The school promotes opportunities to visit local colleges and school sixth forms. It provides comprehensive and high quality information, advice and guidance to students as they apply for courses. All students are helped to make good choices.
 - The strong middle leadership team works very closely with school leaders. Nearly all are new to the post, yet feel well supported by senior leaders who enable them to 'flourish'. They know that they have to sustain recent school improvements and, as a result, regularly check the quality of teaching and its impact on students' progress in their departments. They hold teachers to account over poor performance and there are regular, planned opportunities for teachers to share best practice. As a result, teaching has improved and students are making good progress across a range of subjects.
 - Reducing the gaps in progress between disadvantaged students and others at the school in mathematics and English is a high priority for school leaders and governors. Pupil premium funding is used to provide a range of additional activities, including tutoring, additional teaching support, Saturday schools and sporting expertise. Tracking of students' progress indicates that these initiatives are having a positive effect and gaps will close again this year.
 - Currently, only Years 7 to 9 include boys and they are still therefore a minority group. Nevertheless, students and parents feel that boys have been effectively integrated into what was previously an all-girls' school. Initiatives such as the full-time basketball coach have had a positive impact on this. However, school leaders are not complacent. They know that they will have to review provision for these students as they start GCSE courses, to ensure that the wider curriculum offer meets their social, emotional and academic needs.
 - Leaders see safeguarding as a high priority. Statutory requirements are met based on effective systems which ensure students are kept safe..
 - The local authority understands the strengths of the school and has offered effective support since the last inspection, particularly around teaching and progress in mathematics.
 - School leaders ensure that students have equal opportunities to participate in a range of activities such as music tuition and sports teams, though these experiences could be more regular and varied.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is an experienced and highly skilled group, which has taken an active part in making key staff appointments, including the new Principal. Governors work closely with school leaders to identify areas for development and minimise the impact of staff changes on students' progress. They have a very good understanding of the progress of different groups, particularly of disadvantaged students, and are clear about how school leaders are attempting to minimise any gaps. There are well established systems in place to ensure that good teaching is rewarded and to tackle underperformance. Governors are passionate about the shared vision for the school, are highly organised and have effectively challenged poor performance over time in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are proud of their small school and show respect and courtesy towards staff and each other. Their conduct around the school site is good and all students value the contribution made by the prefects who monitor areas at breaks and lunchtimes. They are smart, punctual and prepared for lessons.
- Although the site is very small, students manage the physical space well, including in the small playground, where boys and girls find places to socialise, play basketball and table tennis and work out in the outdoor gym.
- Students are well behaved in lessons, work hard and want to do well. They have high aspirations for their futures and are keen to adopt student leadership positions. Sometimes, however, they need further encouragement to become actively engaged in their learning without reminders from staff. This is particularly true in Years 7 to 9. Consequently, attitudes to learning are not outstanding.
- The 'Leading Ladies' and 'Boys to Men' programmes help students to think about their previously poor behaviour, raise their self-esteem and encourage them to focus on making improvements to their attitudes to learning. This has been a particularly successful initiative with many students going on to become school prefects and mentors for younger students.
- Students understand what constitutes bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic and cyber bullying. They could name a number of staff they would turn to should they feel that bullying was a problem. They each carry a card that alerts teachers when they are concerned about something. Students say that these cards are hardly ever used. They believe that the school is like a 'family'. Student mentors effectively support younger students.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- School leaders ensure that procedures for keeping students safe are effective and robust.
- Regular staff training around key areas such as extremism and cyber bullying are mapped across the school year. School staff ensure that areas around the school at the end of the day are fully supervised and that school facilities are kept open so that students can do homework or play basketball in a safe place.
- Attendance is above the national average and persistent absence below. As a result of improvements to leadership and management the number of students who do not attend regularly has dropped significantly and attendance is now just above the national average.
- Students receive regular advice and guidance on how to keep themselves safe and report that they feel safe. They understand the risks associated with social media and know who to go to should they feel unsafe.
- The school site is well maintained and secure.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching across subjects is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan interesting and engaging activities that build on students' prior knowledge. Teachers are encouraged to share best practice at designated times during the week, which has helped to eradicate some inconsistencies across subjects.
- There is a particular focus on improving teaching and progress in mathematics. The appointments of an effective head of department and a senior leader who is an experienced teacher of mathematics, have both contributed to significant improvements since September. Students and parents unanimously commented on the progress students were making and comments such as, 'I love maths now because I am making so much progress' were shared with the inspection team. Students are now making rapid progress in mathematics across all year groups.
- The teaching of literacy and reading is particularly strong across the school. Progress in English has been outstanding over time with results much higher than the national average. The school quickly identifies those students who find reading difficult and provides effective reading programmes to support rapid improvement. Literacy is embedded across all subjects. Teachers have high expectations regarding the quality of written work, consistently encourage students to use technical words and clearly model how to speak and write in standard English.

- There are clear guidelines for teachers on marking, which are consistently applied. Sometimes, however, opportunities for students to respond to teachers' comments in class are not frequent enough and, therefore, the activity loses purpose and learning slows.
- Work set for the most able, both in school and as homework, is occasionally not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the growing number of able students in Years 7 and 8. As a result, these students sometimes find the work too easy, lose concentration and their progress is hindered.
- While students' progress in mathematics is good, teachers do not routinely find opportunities for students to use these mathematical skills across a range of other subjects.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students arrive at the school with levels of attainment that are below average. In 2014 the proportion that gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was just below the national average. However, this was as a result of underachievement in mathematics over a number of years. Attainment in English was above the national average. Significant improvements have been made to the teaching of mathematics this year and as a result, information provided by the school indicates that the 2015 results will be much stronger, taking them above national averages.
- Progress in English has been very strong for a number of years. The proportion of students making the expected progress and those exceeding this was much higher than the national average.
- In mathematics, the picture over time has been less positive. However, due to significant improvements in the teaching of mathematics, students across all year groups are now making accelerated progress.
- Progress rates in a number of other subjects has been higher than the national average, including: science, languages and humanities.
- Disadvantaged students made less progress in English in 2014 than their peers, though all students made much better progress than these students nationally.
- In mathematics in 2014, disadvantaged students made less progress than other students at the school and nationally. This is due to significant gaps in their mathematical understanding over time. However, information provided by the school and current work in books, indicates that progress for this group, should be in line with the national average in mathematics and higher in English..
- In 2014, disadvantaged students achieved approximately the same grade as other students at the school and nationally in English. In mathematics, students were two thirds of a grade behind other students at the school and just over a grade behind students nationally. Information provided by the school and work in students' books suggest that there will be no gaps this year and that achievement in English will exceed national averages and mathematics will be in line.
- The small group of most able students achieved good results in English in 2014 but were below this group nationally in mathematics. In 2015, the group is even smaller, but information provided by the school and students' current work, indicates that they are set to achieve results above the national average in both English and mathematics.
- In 2014, disabled students and those with special educational needs made much better progress than this group nationally in English, but were just below in mathematics. Work in books and information provided by the school show that progress this year for this group will be good in both English and mathematics.
- Some students were entered early for mathematics in 2014. The new Principal and new Head of mathematics, acknowledge that this was not an effective strategy as not all students gained grade C or above and had to be re-entered for the examination.
- Reading is encouraged across the school and supports the very good progress made in English. Literacy across all subjects is effectively embedded into lessons. The well-stocked library encourages students to read for pleasure. Students are articulate, confident and well spoken.

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	100627
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	462146

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fergal Roche
Headteacher	Nick Butler
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 May 2013
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