



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
Sedgehill School: *Sixth Form*

Lewisham Education Authority

South East Learning and Skills Council

Dates of inspection: 4-5 May 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

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Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Sedgehill School
Type of school:	Comprehensive
Status:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 18 years
Headteacher:	Ms K Bastick-Styles
Address of school:	Sedgehill Road Catford London SE6 3QW
Telephone:	020 8698 8911
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr M Redfern
Local education authority area:	Lewisham
Learning and Skills Council:	South East
Unique reference number:	100743
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr R Ellis HMI
Dates of inspection:	4-5 May 2004

Introduction

1. Sedgehill School is a mixed, community comprehensive school situated in Catford. There are 129 students in the sixth form. Sedgehill is one of three schools that work in partnership as members of the Hillside sixth-form consortium. Some students from the other schools in the consortium study subjects at Sedgehill, and students from Sedgehill take some courses at the other consortium schools. The consortium offers a range of subjects, including some vocational courses. All sixth-form students follow a programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is low.
2. The school was inspected in November 2002. The sixth form was judged to be inadequate because it was failing to give its students over compulsory school age an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues for the sixth form from the inspection of November 2002, and the sixth form was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on three occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In May 2004, an HMI and an Additional Inspector inspected the sixth form, assessing the quality of education provided and the progress made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of November 2002.

Main findings

5. In accordance with paragraph 1(2) of schedule 7 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, I am of the opinion that the school's sixth form is no longer inadequate, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its students. The main findings of the inspection are:
 - standards are improving. In 2003, the results achieved by the Year 13 students showed a significant improvement when compared to those achieved in the previous year. However, standards overall are well below average when compared to all sixth forms in maintained schools;
 - the progress that the students make is improving. Analysis of the school's data shows that many students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make progress that is satisfactory or better;
 - the students' attendance and punctuality are improving but remain unsatisfactory overall;
 - most students have positive attitudes to learning. In a majority of the lessons the relationships between the students and their teachers were good;
 - the students are given good opportunities in lessons and in other activities to show initiative and undertake responsibilities;

- a tutorial programme contributes effectively to the students' personal development and provides appropriate guidance in their transition to becoming independent adults;
- the school's vision "Education, Achievement and Success for Life" underpins its efforts to promote the students' sense of self-worth and confidence and raise their expectations and aspirations for future success;
- the curriculum is satisfactory overall but has some weaknesses. The school makes no discrete provision for the assessment and teaching of key skills, and the range of vocational courses is limited;
- despite improvements in the religious education curriculum and developments in the tutorial programme there are too few opportunities for the students' spiritual development;
- the sixth-form accommodation has been improved and provides good facilities for independent study. However, the accommodation used for teaching is variable in quality;
- the quality of teaching has improved since the inspection in November 2002. It was satisfactory or better in all of the 19 lessons, including 14 where it was good or very good;
- leadership of the sixth form is strong, dynamic, and well focused on raising the attainment and achievement of all the students. Management structures are clear and operate effectively.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the students' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- improve the curriculum to provide better opportunities for the students to develop key skills and to follow courses that are well matched to their aptitudes and interests;
- improve the students' attendance and punctuality;
- develop further opportunities for the students' spiritual development.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. Many students start their sixth-form courses with standards of attainment that are well-below average. The progress that the students make is improving and most are achieving at least their minimum targets. Many students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make progress that is satisfactory or better.

8. Standards are improving. In 2003, the results achieved by the Year 13 students in the advanced-level examinations showed a significant improvement when compared to those achieved in the previous year and the pass rate rose from 71 to 78 per cent, although this is still low. The average points score rose from 113.3 in 2002 to 168.2 in 2003. However, standards overall remain below average in Year 12 and well below average in Year 13.

9. Analyses of the results from 2003 show that sound standards prevail on several of the courses taught at the school. Good proportions of the students achieved high grades in, for example, AS business studies and design & technology. Teaching in those subjects and in courses for drama and English language have enabled students to make satisfactory or better progress from their earlier attainment. Students who take the general studies examinations have in the main made sound progress, with good progress beginning to emerge from this course in Year 12. Sixth-form standards are rising but there are several areas in which standards and progress are not yet sufficiently secure, particularly in Year 13.

10. Appropriate standards were seen in individual lessons in art, business studies, drama, geography, mathematics and design & technology. In some of these lessons most of the students were engaged well in thoughtful analysis and brisk constructive application of appropriate skills and ideas, for example to improve their acting, to attend to quality in the construction of original artefacts, or to evaluate their own learning.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The students' attendance and punctuality are improving but remain unsatisfactory overall. Attendance for the current school year is good in Year 12 at 94 per cent but unsatisfactory in Year 13, where attendance has fallen from 83 per cent at the start of the year to 74 per cent. Attendance to lessons was variable and punctuality to some lessons was poor. However, improvements in the pastoral system, higher staff expectations, and greater attention to recognising and rewarding good attendance are having a positive influence on students' attendance, particularly in Year 12.

12. Most students have positive attitudes to learning. In a majority of the lessons the relationships between the students and their teachers were good. The students' regard for their sixth form has improved considerably since the appointment of the sixth form co-ordinator and is now good.

13. A tutorial programme has been developed that contributes effectively to the students' personal development and provides appropriate guidance in their transition to becoming independent adults. A sixth-form council has been established and provides a forum for the students to express their opinions. The students are given good opportunities in lessons and in other activities to show initiative and undertake responsibilities, for example in reading with and mentoring pupils in Year 7 or participating in a Duke of Edinburgh Award group.

14. Despite improvements in the religious education curriculum and developments in the tutorial programme there are too few opportunities for the students' spiritual development. The school's sixth form curriculum has been strengthened a little by the addition of elements of religious education within its programmes of general studies and of conferences. Conferences have continued to provide useful opportunities. However, in recent years only a minority of students have taken the AS and A2 examinations in general

studies and the place of this course in the curriculum does not enable the school to provide religious education for all. In recent years it has been taken by a minority of the students, often alongside other AS or A2 courses. It is significantly less accessible to students on vocational courses. The school's arrangements for religious education in the sixth form are not yet sufficiently consolidated. In part, this is because there are inconsistencies in the quality of delivery through form periods and because general studies is not sufficiently prominent in the curriculum.

15. Many staff provide good role models for students. There are also prominent displays that inform students about the positive influence and contribution of various individuals of different cultures and ethnicities. In tutorial sessions the students are challenged to explore a range of perspectives, including their own, and to consider how they apply to a variety of contexts including their own sixth-form experiences.

16. The school's vision "Education, Achievement and Success for Life" underpins its efforts to promote the students' sense of self-worth and confidence and raise their expectations and aspirations for future success.

The quality of education

17. The quality of teaching has improved since the inspection in November 2002. It was at least satisfactory in all the 19 lessons, including 14 where it was good or very good. Many students have become active learners and are developing the study skills required for the courses they are following. A minority of the students have not developed sufficient independence; they are over-reliant on their teachers and lack the confidence to participate fully in lessons.

18. Entry requirements for advanced level courses have been clarified and a programme of guidance and induction for pupils in Year 11 provides appropriate information so that they can make informed decisions about the next stage of their education. The students make guided choices of vocational or more academic courses, or a selection from each of those categories, usually leaving about one fifth of their time for private study.

19. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but has some weaknesses. The school aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects the needs and interests of its students. However, although the range of vocational subjects has increased, there remains a limited choice for students who do not achieve the minimum standard required to undertake advanced courses. In some subjects, the quality of educational provision is weakened by the limited flexibility imposed by the timetable arrangements of the sixth-form consortium. Classes are timetabled for blocks of two or three periods. This leads not only to lengthy lessons that are sometimes used inefficiently, but also to relatively infrequent contact between students and their teachers. There are significant numbers of students, and teachers, for whom the arrangement is unhelpful. The school's provision for religious education and collective worship has improved since the inspection in 2002, but statutory requirements are not fully met.

20. The school makes no discrete provision for the assessment and teaching of key skills in the sixth form. Vocational courses provide opportunities for students to enhance some of these skills and further occasions arise through tutorials and assemblies, particularly regarding study skills and oracy. Provision for students to retake GCSE examinations in

English or in mathematics is limited and cross-curricular provision for mathematical skills is poor. For some students their low levels of communication and mathematical skills limit their learning.

21. Assessment practices are improving. The school uses its data about individual students to identify those who are achieving or exceeding their targets and those who are underachieving. The analysis of data from regular assessments also enables the school to set realistic targets for the students. Generally, departments are positive as to the usefulness of the new assessment procedures. Particularly good practice is emerging in, for example, geography, history, art and drama. Students have benefited from raised self-esteem associated with clear and realistic targets.

22. Accommodation in the sixth-form centre is satisfactory overall. It has been improved by decorating and refurbishing rooms and by developing an area that can be used for independent study. A range of resources requested by the student council has been installed in the sixth form common room. However, some classrooms in other parts of the school that are used for sixth-form lessons are not of the same standard and are variable in quality. However, there are good facilities for independent study.

Leadership and management

23. Leadership is, dynamic, and well focused on raising the attainment and achievement of all the students. The sixth-form co-ordinator provides strong day-to-day leadership for the students and for the sixth-form staff, and is increasingly involved in curriculum and professional development related to the sixth form across the school staff as a whole. Management structures are clear and operate effectively. Systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are sound and are implemented consistently. The sixth-form tutors monitor and record pastoral and academic issues to make sure the students' needs are measured and met; the support and guidance given to individual students are generally good. The administrative support systems in the sixth form are well managed and are a strength of the school.

24. Governors are taking an active interest in the development of the sixth form and in the cost-effectiveness of related work. A group of governors meets to track the school's progress with new arrangements. In addition, a number of the governors are members of the governing body of the sixth-form consortium, a separate group that promotes decisions about their shared resources and post-16 curriculum and that keeps watch over sixth-form results across the three schools. Both of these bodies are aware that the consortium is a significant part of the context for the development of Sedgehill School's sixth form. Some helpful analyses are being made, not only of results but also of resources. Closer analysis is being made of the real costs of sixth-form provision across the consortium, though this has not yet been completed for the Sedgehill sixth form.

25. Rationalisation of courses across the consortium, coupled with the decision to develop a curriculum for the sixth form by drawing on the stronger subject departments and not running courses where demand was low, has resulted in improved class sizes and better value for money overall. However, there remain a number of subjects which have small classes, particularly in Year 13.

26. A common vision and purpose for the Hillsyde consortium is emerging and the school's management systems are being appropriately reviewed and revised to contribute to, and reflect, consortium-wide initiatives and developments. The staff handbook, produced for the Hillsyde consortium, is proving a useful tool for developing consistency of management across the three schools in the consortium.

Implementation of the action plan

27. The inspection report of 2002 required the school to address seven key issues. These principally related to: raising standards and achievement; improving accommodation; developing better attendance and attitudes among the students; improving the monitoring of the students' academic progress; securing effective leadership and management; and providing opportunities for all students to take religious education in the sixth form. Overall, reasonable progress has been made and most tasks have been completed, but there is still work to do on some issues.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The sixth form was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in November 2002. The inspection judged that, in accordance with paragraph 1(2) of schedule 7 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the sixth form was inadequate because it was failing to give its students over compulsory sixth form age an acceptable standard of education.

The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues for the sixth form from the inspection of November 2002. The sixth form was visited by HMI in May and October 2003 and in February 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its sixth-form action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of November 2002.

In May 2004, an HMI and an Additional Inspector returned to inspect the sixth form for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected.

Nineteen lessons or parts of lessons, and three registration sessions were inspected. The students were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, form tutors and a group of students, and informal discussions were held with other staff and students. A wide range of the sixth form's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided in the sixth form and the progress the sixth form has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of November 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

Notes

