

Greig City Academy

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Basic information about the academy

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Name of academy:

Age range of pupils:

Principal:

Address of academy:

Greig City Academy

11 to 18 years

Mr P Sutton

High Street

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Telephone: 020 8609

Name and address of appropriate authority: The governing body, address as above

Chair of governors: Mr T Peryer Unique reference number: 133386

Name of reporting inspector: Ms J Joyner HMI

Dates of inspection: 8 and 9 December 2004

- 1. Greig City Academy is situated in a residential area of North London in the outer London Borough of Haringey, although it has many features of an inner city school. It draws pupils from a very wide catchment area and more than 60 primary schools. Greig City Academy is sponsored by the Board of Education of the London Diocese and The Greig Trust. Its specialism is information and communication technology (ICT). The academy opened in September 2002, although the first phase of extensive building works was still under way. The building work has continued to cause disruption. Three of the four phases are now finished and completion is scheduled for February 2005. There are 724 pupils on roll, including 97 in Year 12 of the newly re-opened sixth form. Forty four per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. Eighteen per cent of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs and less than one per cent have a Statement of Special Educational Need; these proportions broadly match the national averages. The community is culturally diverse: over 50 different first languages are spoken within the academy and approximately half the pupils have a mother tongue other than English. There is a significant level of mobility in the pupil population.
- 2. In December 2004, six of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) inspected the academy, assessing the standard of education provided.

Main findings



- 3. The main findings of the inspection are:
 - Greig City Academy is improving rapidly. Early problems have been overcome and a learning culture is being established. The adults and the vast majority of the pupils work together harmoniously and with mutual respect;
 - the academy's GCSE results in 2003 at the end of its first year were much better than expected, given the pupils' standards when they entered Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 3 results, however, were lower than expected. At the end of its second year, in 2004, the academy's Key Stage 3 results rose in English and mathematics but not in science, and GCSE results were lower than the year before. The overall performance at GCSE matched the average for schools in similar socio-economic circumstances: the Key Stage 3 English result was above average in this respect, whereas the mathematics and science results were well below average. In both years the pupils' results were well below the national averages at both key stages:
 - the pupils now make at least satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with English as an additional language made good progress; those with special educational needs made satisfactory progress when they received additional support but made less than satisfactory progress in most mainstream classes;
 - the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the academy were good.
 Behaviour in lessons was almost always good; attitudes to learning in most lessons were at least satisfactory and sometimes good;
 - attendance continues to improve and is now satisfactory and close to the national figure. The academy has good monitoring procedures. The rate of exclusion has fallen over the last year and is now very low. However, punctuality remains a cause

- for concern both at the beginning of the day and to lessons;
- the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, reflecting the quality of provision. The philosophy of educating the child within a Christian context permeates the academy;
- the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has improved significantly since the summer term. It was satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons and good or better in just under half. In the sixth form, the teaching was mostly good;
- the curriculum is not fully meeting the needs of specific groups of the pupils.
 Vocational education and the sixth-form curriculum are underdeveloped. The sixth-form curriculum lacks enrichment;
- o procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are underdeveloped and unsatisfactory. Information about the pupils' performance, including that related to pupils who have individual education plans, is rarely used in lessons and the work set is often the same for all the pupils in the class. Target setting in the sixth form is weak. Predictions are not always reliable and targets, when set, are not always the ones that will help the pupils to raise their attainment. This lack of clarity also extends to whole-school predictions and targets:
- the overall quality of leadership and management is sound. The new principal is
 providing good leadership. In his short time at the academy he has driven
 improvements with energy and a sense of urgency. Staff are enthusiastic about his
 vision for the academy and are keen to help make it a reality. Staff and pupils
 respond positively to the principal's consultative and approachable style;
- the members of the senior team vary in their experience and effectiveness but the overall quality of senior management is satisfactory. All provide the headteacher with loyal support and work hard but repeated changes of principal have reduced the impact of their efforts over time;
- middle management is unsatisfactory overall, despite the hard work of most middle managers and the effective contributions of some. Most middle managers are not playing a full part in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards;
- the governing body is very well led by the chair of governors who is an experienced educationalist. Other governors are experienced and increasingly well informed about the progress that the academy is making;
- good relationships are being secured with the community and the academy is developing links with some primary schools although it has yet to join with neighbouring secondary schools in order to have a broader impact in raising standards:
- support for the school has, in the main, been from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and, most recently, in the form of an intervention strategy. This has been effective in stabilising the academy and providing a firm foundation for future developments. Where support has been provided for subjects, for example by the local education authority (LEA) in ICT, it has been effective.

Key issues



- 4. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, principal, senior managers and staff need to:
 - o continue to raise standards, in particular in the core subjects, across all key stages;
 - increase the rate of progress that the pupils make in their learning, especially those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, and those with low levels of literacy and numeracy:
 - continue to improve the quality of teaching, in particular by providing a better match
 of work to pupils' differing needs and making better use of assessment information;
 - o develop the role of middle managers, especially with regard to monitoring and

Inspection findings

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Standards achieved by the pupils



- 5. The academy's GCSE results in 2003, at the end of its first year, were much better than expected given the pupils' standards when they entered Key Stage 4: the Key Stage 3 results were lower than expected. At the end of its second year, in 2004, the academy's Key Stage 3 results rose in English and mathematics but not in science, and GCSE results were lower than the year before. The overall performance at GCSE matched the average for schools in similar socio-economic circumstances: the Key Stage 3 English result was above average in this respect whereas mathematics and science results were well below average. In both years the pupils' results were well below the national averages at both key stages.
- 6. The academy's performance at Key Stage 3 in 2004 achieved the targets set for English and mathematics but the science result fell far short. At Key Stage 4, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more higher grades at GCSE matched the target set. The academy has a breakdown of GCSE results by gender and ethnic group. The relative performance of boys and girls was similar to the national picture, except that far more boys failed to achieve graded results in both English and mathematics.
- 7. The academy's predictions for the outcomes of the 2004 GCSE examinations have proved to be seriously flawed. It is not clear that the over-generosity of previous assessments has been corrected, and there is also a danger that the teaching may not be geared to the pupils' real levels of attainment. The principal is aware that assessment has been poor and is taking steps to address the continuing weaknesses.
- 8. Overall the pupils' progress is at least satisfactory. The pupils made good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in just under half the lessons. The pupils learning English as an additional language benefited from specialist provision targeted at their particular needs and made good progress. The pupils who have special educational needs made satisfactory progress in the lessons when they were supported by teaching assistants. However, the progress of both groups was less secure, and less than satisfactory in other lessons, as their needs were not taken into account systematically in the teachers' planning and in their teaching.
- 9. Pupils in the sixth form achieve a wide range of standards, commensurate with the level of the course they follow. All made at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons; for example, in an ICT lesson in Year 12 all six pupils in the group had made good progress since the start of term. In a Year 12 drama lesson the pupils achieved very good standards because of their interest in and commitment to the subject; some of them were also taking part in the school production.
- 10. Standards in English are too low at all key stages. They are depressed by low levels of literacy, limited vocabularies and too little reading for pleasure. The pupils with English as an additional language receive insufficient support to reach the standards of which they are capable. Some able pupils do reach the nationally expected standards, more often in oral than in written work. In a low-attaining group in Year 7, all the pupils achieved good standards relative to their low prior attainment as they increased their vocabulary, improved their spelling and read a play with enthusiasm. This was because of the very good specialist teaching they were receiving from the

teacher and the teaching assistant. In contrast, in a higher attaining Year 9 group, the least able pupils made too little progress because the teacher had failed to engage their interest in the content of the lesson and contributed to their further disaffection by spending too much time on managing their behaviour. When the pupils were interested in the lesson content and sufficient support was provided to enable them to participate fully and achieve success, they made good progress and achieved the standards of which they were capable. For example, in a Year 9 lesson, where pupils were studying a short story by Kate Chopin, most pupils recalled events accurately and confidently, and offered their own interpretations.

- 11. Standards in mathematics are well below the national averages. In the lessons most pupils made reasonable progress, applying appropriate mathematical techniques accurately and explaining their methods clearly when asked. Occasionally, the pupils were unsure about what they should do or the work set was too easy. Overall, the pupils are not sufficiently skilled at estimating or checking the reasonableness of their answers: some pupils became enmeshed in the specifics of what they were doing and lost sight of the relevance of the mathematical skills and knowledge involved. The policy of not allowing the pupils to take their mathematics text books home is counterproductive in relation to raising standards.
- 12. Standards in science lessons are rising because the management of the science department has improved and the pupils are being taught more effectively. The schemes of work and lesson plans have been rewritten in order to raise standards. The pupils make sound progress because the lessons follow an effective common pattern, in line with the national strategy, with an interesting starter activity as they come into the lesson. The pupils' progress is helped by the use in all lessons of computer-based presentations which ensure a good pace and motivate most pupils. The pupils have a legacy of a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and so were sometimes working at standards below those expected for their age because they have not previously covered the work. The lesson plans from Year 8 onwards often sensibly included an element of revision to ensure that all of the basic science skills and knowledge had been understood. This was helping pupils to achieve higher standards. The lessons usually included a practical element which the pupils always enjoyed, and they paid due regard to health and safety.
- 13. Standards in ICT are low, but are rising. The results in the GNVQ examinations in 2004 were poor. Results in Key Stage 4 are predicted to improve significantly this year, based on the modules completed to date. The pupils made at least satisfactory progress in all the ICT lessons observed. Standards on entry are below age-related expectations, but show steady improvement as pupils move through the year groups. In a Year 7 lesson, the pupils showed insecure keyboard skills in navigating a spreadsheet program and their widespread weaknesses in literacy meant that many struggled to edit their work quickly or accurately. However, the higher attaining pupils in Year 9 showed considerable dexterity in their use of graphics in ICT.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development



- 14. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the academy were good. Their attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of the lessons and good or very good in 56 per cent. The pupils appreciated the imaginative way many lessons had been devised and they responded well to the use of electronic whiteboards. In most lessons the pupils were attentive and responded well to the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. In some lessons the pupils' attitudes to learning were more variable: many were totally engaged in the task and wanted to develop their own understanding, but others completed the task in a desultory fashion with few demonstrations of independent learning.
- 15. The pupils were courteous to adults, opening doors and offering assistance. They wanted visitors to be impressed. They were usually respectful towards each other, and friendly, although they were lively in the playground. The academy is beginning to develop posts of responsibility for

the pupils to undertake. There are a number of individual arrangements for older pupils to mentor younger pupils but this is not systematic. Good plans are in place to develop this initiative in the spring term 2005. The pupils demonstrate their growing sense of pride in the academy through their wearing of the uniform and the respect shown for the learning environment.

- 16. The academy has been very successful in reducing exclusions. The number of pupils excluded during 2002-3 was 160; the figure fell to 15 in 2003-4 and in the autumn term 2004 ten pupils were excluded.
- 17. Attendance has improved each year since the academy opened and is now satisfactory. In the first year of the academy attendance was 88 per cent; in 2003-4 it was 90.5 per cent. The figure for the autumn term was 92.14, which is above the national average; however on the first day of the inspection, attendance was 88.33 per cent. There are good systems for monitoring attendance. Unauthorised absence shows a downward trend from 6.6 per cent in the first year of the academy to 1.99 per cent for the autumn term 2004. Punctuality has been a cause for concern since the academy opened. The academy has been focusing its attention on punctuality at the start of the day but, at 6.95 per cent for the autumn term 2004, the proportion of pupils who arrive late remains too high. Punctuality to lessons throughout the day also remains a cause for concern, particularly in the afternoon.
- 18. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, reflecting the quality of provision. The philosophy of educating the child within a Christian context permeates the academy and is reflected in the displays in classrooms and in the public area, in the daily collective worship and in the way that the vast majority of relationships are conducted. A time is set aside each day for collective worship; four times a week in the classroom and once a week as a year group. The academy's chaplain works for two and half days a week and is respected by and well known to the pupils. Imaginative use is made of the technology available in every classroom to show the chaplain's weekly presentation. Tutor groups were respectful during the daily prayer and the tutor period provided a very positive start to the day. The assembly was a thoughtful collective act of worship, appropriate to the age of the pupils and the season. The pupils listened attentively and responded well throughout. A weekly lesson is timetabled for personal, social, health and citizenship education. It follows a carefully chosen sequence of themes and, in addition, there is a thoughtful programme for the tutor periods.
- 19. Procedures for child protection and practice regarding health and safety are secure.
- 20. Sixth-form students feel that they have adequate support and good guidance. Guidance about the sixth form for pupils in Year 11 is sound, and sixth-form students understand the equivalence of the different qualifications that they have chosen to study. Sixth-form students are proud to be a part of the academy and are positive about the quality of the provision. They feel that they have a voice and are able, through the student council, to influence academy developments.
- 21. The academy provides a wide range of extracurricular activities at lunchtime and at the end of the day drawn mainly from the arts, physical education and ICT. These include, for example, sound engineering, gospel dancing and debating. Many pupils and staff have been working together on a production of *Godspell*.
- 22. Good relationships are being secured with the community and links with primary schools are developing well. The three local primary schools bring groups of pupils in to use the ICT facilities. The Pupil Progress Manager for Year 7 and other members of staff are working more closely than previously with all the partner primary schools to ensure a smooth transition for the pupils who are coming to the academy. A number of adult groups use the academy's facilities after the school day but this aspect of the academy's work will be limited until the final phase of the building is completed. The support of the community action network is helping the academy to create opportunities for the pupils to engage more with the local community and for the community to make better use of the academy's facilities.

The quality of education



- 23. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall and it has improved significantly since the summer term. It was satisfactory or better in nine out of ten lessons and good or better in just under half. In the sixth form, the teaching was mostly good.
- 24. The teaching was very good in individual lessons in drama, physical education, art and English, and good overall in science and art. The teaching was unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons in mathematics, English and literacy.
- 25. Where the lessons were good or very good, teachers identified the small steps the pupils needed to take to improve their performance; for example, in a Year 10 art lesson where pupils were developing their drawing skills, and a Year 8 religious education lesson on the parable of the sower, where pupils were encouraged to think for themselves. The pace of learning was good because clear time boundaries were set for each activity. The teachers set tasks and asked questions that made the pupils think for themselves, using praise to encourage and reward their efforts. They expected the pupils to work hard but made the lessons enjoyable. The good rapport between teachers and pupils was a key feature of these lessons.
- 26. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons the work was dull and did not require much of the pupils. Pupils spent too long on tasks that involved little more than copying, and they lost interest and concentration. Relationships became fragile and fractious, and discipline was unsatisfactory.
- 27. In most cases, the teachers' lesson planning was at least satisfactory and there was a good range of activities, although few teachers matched the work they set to the range of the pupils' different learning needs. This was a particular problem where lessons required the pupils to read text that was too complex for their level of skill, copy quickly or give written answers to questions. Too few teachers planned their lessons to deploy the more experienced additional adults effectively. The length of lessons, 75 minutes, provided too much scope for work to be stretched to fill the time available.
- 28. The school is generally well resourced with modern technology. The use of ICT underpins well the teaching at the academy. All classrooms have access to good ICT, and teachers have embraced the new technology in order to structure and guide the pupils' learning. ICT was effectively used in almost all lessons to plan work, to communicate clear objectives, to model learning outcomes and as an aid to exposition. In a few lessons, the teachers made good use of whiteboards to develop interactive learning; for example, in a Year 7 Spanish lesson where it was used to encourage the pupils to take a more active part in the lesson and contribute their views on school subjects in Spanish. However, in many lessons they were not used to full advantage.
- 29. The quality of sixth-form teaching is mostly good. Sixth-form students are motivated to do well and make good progress overall in lessons. However, sixth-form courses are new and many teachers are unfamiliar with specific syllabus requirements. The training needs of sixth-form teachers have not been audited or systematically addressed.
- 30. Procedures for assessing the pupils' progress and attainment are underdeveloped and are unsatisfactory. There is too much inconsistency in the way that assessment is carried out. The assessment policy has been reviewed but has not yet been agreed by governors. It includes a sound framework for marking and is beginning to influence the way teachers mark pupils' work, but the quality and regularity of marking remain too variable.
- 31. Data on examination and test performance has been collated and analysed by departments and is available to teachers, but it is not often used in lesson planning or to make sure that the pupils are doing work at the right level. Individual targets, some of which are in the pupils' books, have been set for each subject, but the precision of target setting varies from subject to subject. Information

about the pupils' performance, including that related to the pupils who have individual education plans, is rarely used in lessons and the work set is often the same for all the pupils in the class.

- 32. In the sixth form, tracking of the students' progress by tutors and the sixth-form managers is weak. Information about the students' prior attainment is inadequately used to guide their choices and to set individual targets. Although the academy has the GCSE results achieved by sixth-form students, this information is not shared with staff and students to set realistic target grades; target setting is weak. Predictions made by teachers are variable and, those made by some staff are poorly informed.
- 33. While the curriculum is sound for most pupils, it is unsatisfactory for those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those who speak English as an additional language, because it does not fully meet their needs. Pupils with low levels of literacy and numeracy also do not have their needs fully met. The curriculum has been broadened with a small number of vocational options at Key Stage 4 and, unusually, at Key Stage 3, where pupils in Year 9 are taking up to two vocational GCSE courses over either two or three years. Although this arrangement has the potential to provide wider curricular opportunities to match pupils' aspirations, insufficient planning has been done for the pupils who complete the course in two years.
- 34. Within the sixth form, there is a wide range of courses but too little enrichment. The academy offers a broad range of sixth-form courses at different levels of accreditation to meet the wideranging needs of the students. Seventeen subjects are offered at level 3, including two, law and psychology, which are taught as distance learning units with tutored support; a suitable range of options is offered at level 1 and level 2, including GCSE, GNVQ and key skills accreditation. Although a few students were unable to opt for their chosen subject combination, most are pleased with the range of courses that they have been able to follow. Where courses have been found to be unsuitable for individual students, the curriculum has been adapted to meet their specific needs.
- 35. Given a late decision to introduce the sixth form for the start of this academic year, there is a good range of viable courses on offer. However, the sixth-form curriculum lacks breadth: there is a paucity of curriculum enhancement. There is no structured tutor programme; registration time is not used effectively to support and extend the students' learning. Plans are in place for all students to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, but there is no core provision for broader enrichment studies, for sport, recreation or religious education. A few sixth-form students are fully involved with whole-academy events, such as the *Godspell* production, but students generally are insufficiently concerned with the rest of the academy; their wider roles and responsibilities are underdeveloped.
- 36. Provision throughout the academy for pupils who have special educational needs is unsatisfactory, despite the best efforts of teachers and support assistants. There is a small core of competent mentors and classroom assistants who have the relevant experience, and their numbers have expanded recently. Several are new to the post and are inexperienced; they have been briefed about the role but are too new to it to have had an impact. The post of co-ordinator for special educational needs has been vacant for almost two terms and the responsibilities are being carried by an assistant vice-principal. However, she has insufficient time to carry out the heavy weight of work that has accrued; for example, auditing the list of pupils who have special educational needs and updating the pupils' individual education plans, and this work has fallen behind schedule. A co-ordinator for special educational needs has been appointed and is due to take up her post in January 2005. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs and with statements does not accurately reflect the level of need within the academy.
- 37. Pupils who have English as an additional language are aided by three qualified teachers who provide good specialist support. However, as with the pupils who have special needs, the provision in mainstream classes does not meet these pupils' needs.

Leadership and management



- 38. Leadership and management are sound overall. The new principal is providing good leadership. He took up post at the start of term, and is the fourth principal since the academy opened in 2002, although two served concurrently. The new principal is an experienced headteacher who is already working well to introduce sustainable systems and structures. He has a realistic understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. He is driving improvements with energy and a sense of urgency. His consultative, hands-on style is motivating staff at all levels and empowering many to contribute ideas and take greater responsibility for the implementation of policies. The frequent changes in the leadership of the academy have slowed progress, as different individuals have advocated different approaches and have done so with different styles. For example, there have been many improvement plans, which have covered similar ground in successive years, but they have not been properly and consistently implemented. Responsibilities have not always been clear. The new principal is sensibly building on the best of the existing policies and plans, making minor adjustments where necessary after discussion with his team. He is very aware of the need for a period of stability and is planning to secure good provision over the longer term.
- 39. The governing body is very well led by an experienced educationalist. Other governors are experienced and becoming increasingly well informed about the progress the academy is making. They ask searching questions and fulfil satisfactorily their role as critical friends.
- 40. Senior managers vary in their experience and effectiveness but the overall quality of senior management is satisfactory. All provide the principal with loyal support and work hard but repeated changes of principal have reduced the impact of their efforts over time. Recent changes to responsibilities at this level and plans for a new structure augur well for the future.
- 41. The quality of middle management is unsatisfactory overall, despite the hard work of most middle managers and the effective contribution of some. Most middle managers are not playing a full part in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards. Few systematically look at pupils' work and teachers' planning and not all have sound plans for the development of the subjects and areas for which they are responsible. The responsibilities of post holders within faculties are not always clear. The review of examination results, however, is an example of recent good work by heads of faculty. There has also been a lack of stability at this level of management.
- 42. The academy's development is currently guided by an overarching plan which seeks to bring about improvement in all areas of its work. The plan applies to this academic year only and is underpinned by other, more detailed action plans. The overall plan is sound but it sets a very full agenda for the current year, which includes many actions to address areas which might reasonably have been assumed to be working efficiently two years into the academy's life for example, actions to improve the line-management system and increase self-evaluation by departments. Given the ambitious scope of the plan, it is important that accompanying plans, for example for subject areas, are thorough, realistic and based on current expertise. Too few such plans exist, including those required for key areas of the academy's work such as the sixth form.
- 43. The recruitment and retention of staff have been difficult. This has affected continuity at all levels of the staffing structure and has resulted in some inexperienced staff being appointed to posts of responsibility.
- 44. There has been a large amount of external support for the academy over the last 18 months, including a DfES-funded intervention strategy, which has been successful in stabilising the situation and providing a firm foundation for this year. Where support has been provided for subjects areas, for example in ICT by the LEA, it has been effective and welcomed by staff.
- 45. The principal has recently attempted to strengthen links with the LEA and is attending meetings of local headteachers in an effort to improve communication and fulfil the academy's remit to work

with local schools. The academy has forged a network of useful external links with, for example, Communities Action Network, Continuous School Improvement, Leadership Incentive Grant, Aim Higher, and London Challenge.

Appendix - Information about the inspection



The academy was inspected 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. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act. Six HMI inspected the academy for two days.

The inspection took place in accordance with a protocol agreed by Ofsted and the DfES.

Forty eight lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and four registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the principal, senior staff and a range of middle managers, and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the academy's documentation was scrutinised.

The inspection assessed the standard of education provided by the academy.

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