

Central Foundation School for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100975
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	276433
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2006
Reporting inspector	Lauren Ovenden

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Cruse Anne Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Harley Grove Bow London E3 2AT
Telephone number	020 8981 1131
Fax number	020 8983 0188

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Central Foundation Girls' School is a larger than average inner city school serving an area of high social deprivation. It is a Performing Arts Specialist College and has recently been awarded a second specialism in Citizenship and English. A very large proportion of the pupils have a minority ethnic heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. There are currently fewer identified pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than normally found.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade:

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that new management processes are consistently well applied.
- Improve pupils' standards and achievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Raise expectations and challenge for more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade:

Personal development and well-being

Grade:

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade:

Teaching and learning are good. Managers now check the quality of teaching regularly and know the strengths and weaknesses. There is a more consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. Overall, lessons are well planned and incorporate resources that support pupils' learning effectively. Paired and group work help pupils' personal development. Pupils say they enjoy learning and teachers are helpful. In the most effective lessons, teachers set high standards and sustain pupils' interest with appropriately challenging and varied tasks. In most lessons, behaviour is good and teachers are beginning to use interactive white boards effectively to prepare and support their teaching. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and ask well-chosen questions to deepen pupils' understanding and stimulate discussion. While focused intervention outside of lessons targets specific groups of pupils, lessons are not always matched to the needs of all the pupils, particularly more able girls who are not challenged enough. In the sixth form, students also benefit from knowledgeable teaching and well planned lessons. This enables them to engage in thoughtful debate and to develop greater independence in their learning.

Although marking often sets out how learning can be improved in both the main school and sixth form, this is not yet consistent. In the best examples, pupils understand what level they are working at, what to do to improve, and they have opportunities to evaluate their own learning and that of their peers. There is some good practice in the school that is not yet being shared widely enough. The school provides pupils, teachers and parents with detailed data on progress and targets. These support pupils' learning and enable the school to identify issues or trends which are then used to target learning resources more effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade:

The school has a good curriculum which provides well for the differing needs of its pupils. In Years 10 and 11, a wide range of GCSE subjects is complemented by a good choice of vocational courses, including health and social care and business. The school is rightly proud of its Preparation for Adult Life course. This incorporates personal health and social education,

citizenship, enterprise education and a good programme of work-related learning, careers guidance and work experience. Strong links have been established with external agencies, such as Young Enterprise, in order to further pupils' economic awareness.

Achieving specialist status in the performing arts and, very recently, in English and citizenship, has enabled the school to enrich and extend its curriculum and its resources. For example, the new specialism, known in the school as the 'Voice' specialism is being used to increase pupils' contributions to the school and local communities. There has been much emphasis on fostering links with the wider community by appointing outreach workers in the school's specialist areas. Both the main school and the sixth form take their arts productions to other schools and institutions, while teachers share their expertise with local primary schools. One parent stated, 'The performing arts have been a joy'.

Pupils are encouraged to stay healthy through a thorough programme of personal health and social education, although the provision for physical education is below national recommendations. The curriculum is well supported by a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities which include sport, music, drama and a number of academic support clubs. Sixth form students have a broad choice of A Level courses and some level 2 and level 3 vocational courses are also available.

Care, guidance and support

Grade:

Care and support for all pupils are good with some outstanding features. The care and support for vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well coordinated. Arrangements for child protection are rigorous. The school has established a highly effective support panel that oversees the support services provided. Consequently, communication between the professionals who support these pupils is excellent, intervention strategies are timely and pupils receive the type and level of support appropriate to their needs. The school works very well with outside agencies and this is complemented by a very wide range of support for pupils' welfare in the school itself. The school also has an effective referral unit. This is well organised and pivotal in successfully helping pupils who are at risk of exclusion. The unit also helps pupils who are reluctant to attend school to return to lessons. There are, however, disproportionately high numbers of white British girls who are excluded from class, despite the effective strategies used by the school to support all learners.

There is good coordination of work-related learning, enterprise activities and careers guidance particularly through the preparing for adult life programme. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support and make good progress. Assessment procedures have been recently improved, but the guidance given to pupils on how they can improve is still inconsistent. The school provides good support after school for pupils to do homework and receive further help. These sessions are very well attended.

Leadership and management

Grade:

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Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Students

Thank you for welcoming us to your school on 22-23 March. It was clear that you take pride in your school and value the opportunities it offers. We were particularly impressed with your confidence and attitude to school. Central Foundation Girls' School is a good school that is working very hard to become even better. Ms. Hudson and her staff have a clear understanding of how they can improve the school; through your performing arts and new 'Voice' specialism and through a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Your teachers are knowledgeable and provide a very good level of care. Lessons are well planned and we saw some very good group and discussion work which promoted your understanding.

However, by the end of Year 9, students last year did not achieve as well as they could do. The school has taken action to tackle this, through providing you with access to revision material and additional classes. This is beginning to have an effect. You can help to improve your results by working hard with your teachers. These years are important as they form a foundation for your future success.

There are some new management systems that have been put in place. These are good, and we recommend that the school continues to expand and develop them to support your learning. Some of the work set in lessons was not challenging enough and more difficult work is needed for some of you. We wish you every success in your future careers at the school.

Yours faithfully,

Lauren Ovenden HMI

Lead Inspector