



Hackney Free and Parochial CofE Secondary School Specialist Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100284
Local Authority Hackney
Inspection number 285760
Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Lauren Ovenden HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Paragon Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Hackney
Age range of pupils	11–16		London E9 6NR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8985 2430
Number on roll (school)	729	Fax number	020 8533 5441
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Nigel Williams
		Headteacher	Mrs Joan Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	20–21 September 2006	285760

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving an area of very high deprivation. Over three quarters of its students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being Black African and Black Caribbean. Almost half the students are eligible for free school meals and approximately one third speak English as an additional language. There are currently more boys than girls attending the school, which has higher than average numbers of students with special educational needs. The school is a specialist sports college and full service extended school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has a caring, and inclusive ethos where students respect their teachers and peers. There is generally a calm, productive learning environment. Its specialist status as a sports college is reflected across the school, such as through the promotion of healthy lifestyles and leadership through sport. In addition, it has enabled the school to develop highly effective transition arrangements for new Year 7 students and improve community links. Students enjoy school and they arrive eager and expecting to learn.

Inspectors judged achievement as good although standards are below average. Students enter the school with low prior attainment and few have achieved the highest levels of attainment in Year 6. Students make good progress by the end of year 11. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, students who speak English as an additional language and looked after children also make good progress. This is a result of satisfactory teaching and very good extended learning opportunities that occur outside the normal school day. Support for learners is effective and targeted actions help specific groups of learners to achieve their potential. Teachers generally plan their lessons well and a range of different teaching activities often stimulate learning. However, lessons do not always challenge the more able to extend their understanding. Changes made have improved the curriculum, enabling students to access alternative accreditation and to focus on appropriate courses.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection under the very effective leadership of the head teacher and her team. There have been significant improvement GCSE results and examinations in Year 9, but the school is not complacent; they know that standards are still below average and there are significant differences in attainment across subjects. School leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, although inspectors found that they underestimated some of their strengths. There are clear processes for school self-evaluation and monitoring systems are in place. However, in subjects where student progress is less good and attainment is lower than in other subjects, monitoring is not always fully analysed and the impact of actions taken adequately assessed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards at GCSE and in Year 9 examinations
- Challenge more able students to make better progress
- Increase the rigour of monitoring in some areas of the curriculum to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, students make good progress by the end of Year 11 and standards have risen rapidly over the past three years. Standards at GCSE remain below average for passes at 5A*-C and broadly average at 5A*-G.

In Years 7–9, students make average progress and attainment in national examinations, whilst improving significantly, remains below average. In the core subjects, students perform relatively less well in mathematics than they do in science and English.

Students make better progress in Years 10–11 than in Years 7–9, although progress is inconsistent across subjects. In GCSE mathematics, students make satisfactory progress, whilst in English, they make good progress. In some areas, as a consequence of good or better teaching, students' progress very well and standards are above average, for example, in physical education.

The school analyses the performance of specific groups of learners and takes action to address any differences. For example, it runs additional courses for underachieving students and to gain the interest of disaffected learners. As a result, there is little variation between the achievements of different groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Many students expressed the view that they are happy to come to school where they feel safe and cared for. They understand the importance of adopting safe practices. The school has an improving ethos of respect, which is leading to improved behaviour. The school ethos is understood by both students and staff and is supported by a structured system of rewards and sanctions that is valued by students. Attendance has improved significantly and is now above national average. The school continues to use well thought out strategies to deal with students who are consistently absent. Students say that if any bullying happens there are good systems in place for support. The school seeks the views of its students through the increasingly effective school council.

Students' social, moral and cultural development is good and the school is developing opportunities to enhance their spiritual development, through the building of the new reflective space and daily reflections during tutor time. Many students take part in extra curricular clubs, and are able to take responsibility as school prefects and members of the school council. Students are able to make some contribution to the wider community, for example, through their involvement in work experience placements in local businesses, as sports coaches for primary schools and through charitable work done on an expedition to Kenya. Students develop skills that equip them for their future economic well-being, for example, through work-related learning and mentoring programmes. The school recognises that more needs to be done to enable students to gain appropriate qualifications in information and communications technology (ICT), numeracy and literacy, as exemplified by the introduction of a new ICT course in September.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) and Citizenship programme is developing student's knowledge and understanding in order to take responsibility for their own decisions. The monitoring and evaluation of this does not yet place enough emphasis on students developing personal skills. The school is improving provision to encourage a healthier lifestyle. Students understand the importance of healthy living

and participate well in sporting activities. However, they felt that there is more they can do towards adopting a healthy lifestyle, for example, by choosing healthier food when they leave the school at lunchtime.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students' learning is enhanced by the extensive opportunities afforded outside normal school hours. This includes targeted support for specific groups of learners and general support, such as homework clubs. The school is effective in promoting personal development, and these activities increase learner motivation. The pace of learning accelerates as students move through the school.

The school has an accurate idea of the strengths and weaknesses of its teaching and improves the quality of provision through the sharing of good practice. Most lessons are well planned and incorporate a variety of learning activities. They are introduced in a lively manner and end with a review that consolidates learning effectively. Teachers exhibit good subject knowledge and pose questions clearly to monitor the progress of students. However, high attaining students are not always challenged sufficiently by more difficult learning tasks, as exemplified by the relatively low proportion of students achieving the highest levels in Year 9 examinations. Less effective lessons are overly dominated by the teacher, with pupils being cast in a passive role and losing interest.

Students are generally well behaved and are keen to learn and participate in classroom activities. Students commented that they feel they learn best when they work in groups or do practical activities. They generally know how well they are doing in each subject and are aware of their own targets. Teachers effectively monitor the progress of students.

The use of ICT to promote learning in all subjects was an area for development at the last inspection. The school has made good progress to improve ICT resources and they are now used well to enliven teaching. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is not embedded consistently in the teaching of all subjects.

Generally, additional adults help to improve students' learning within lessons. They provide valuable support to students who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Sometimes their role is peripheral to the learners and they are not sufficiently involved in tasks directly related to learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. It meets well the diverse needs of its students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Weaknesses highlighted

in the previous inspection have now been addressed, such as the lack of work-related learning at Key Stage 4. This is now a strength of the school. A wide range of vocational and work-related opportunities prepare students effectively for the world of work, although low levels of literacy and numeracy among some pupils mitigate against this good work. A high proportion of students attend local colleges and take vocational courses which they find relevant and interesting. These links and the work of mentors have led to improvements in students' attendance rates.

Students now take a smaller and more manageable number of GCSE subjects than previously. Subject choice is maintained through collaboration with local schools and a wide range of alternative forms of accreditation are also available. All students gain external accreditation in PE. A good range of out of school activities give students additional help to improve their standard of work and complete homework, as well as providing activities to promote their personal development and leisure interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for students is good. The school, though its extended school provision, works to include parents in their children's learning, for example, through Saturday and holiday workshops which parents and students can attend. One student said that they were nervous about coming to the school but the school had prepared them well. The school liaises closely with an increasing range of service providers to ensure that students have good care and guidance. There is an improving systematic approach made to the identification of students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Health and safety routines are in place. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. Students expressed confidence in feeling safe at school and were clear about to whom they would talk if they wanted to discuss a personal problem. Improving provision is enabling students to be informed about their future career and education choices.

Students are involved in setting their learning targets. An improving tracking system including progress review days is enabling the school and students to have a better knowledge of progress being made. Targets are reviewed throughout the year. The monitoring and evaluation of the process is improving and in some subjects the evidence is used effectively so they know how it is helping to raise standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The school leadership team, very effectively led by the head teacher, has a clear vision for the school which is communicated effectively to staff. Recent changes to the middle management structure have introduced clusters of subjects, facilitating more effective sharing of good practice. However, the school has not yet sufficiently evaluated the effectiveness of this in improving students' learning.

Monitoring and evaluation processes are generally well developed, although in some curriculum areas it is used less effectively to target improvement and evaluate the impact of actions taken. The school's leaders most effectively promote equality of opportunity and the personal development and well-being of all students. Staff are suitably qualified, and senior leaders have taken imaginative steps to fill vacancies.

The school has made good use of its specialist status as a sports college and as an extended school to enhance provision. All Year 11 students are assessed and receive accreditation in PE, with increasing numbers taking the GCSE. The school has participated in a number of local, national and international initiatives which have raised awareness of active learning across the school. However, the impact of the status has not been consistent across the school in raising attainment. Joint activities with feeder primary schools have led to improved transition for new students, enabling them to start school with confidence. Extended school activities, build on specialist links to the community and encourage students to live healthily. The school offers parents opportunities to participate in the life of the school through sport and activities organised by Extended Schools. Demand for new student places surpasses availability.

Resources are deployed well to achieve good value for money. The school has worked hard to convert a significant budget deficit at the time of the last inspection into a considerable surplus. The school complies with all legal requirements. Governors make a satisfactory contribution to the success of the school, supporting senior managers and sometimes challenging them. There are good and improving links with a wide range of external agencies. Parents' and students' views are taken into account well. The school is well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. When we spoke to you, it was clear that you enjoy school and appreciate all the sporting and other activities available. Your thoughtful and well-spoken questions and responses impressed all members of the inspection team.

We judged your school to be a good and improving school. In conversations with inspectors, you could describe how the school had changed for the better, even if you had only been at the school for a year! We were impressed by:

- how much progress you make
- your attitude to learning
- they way school is led by your head teacher and senior staff
- the generally calm and caring atmosphere around the school
- the way you treat each other with respect
- how the school works hard to support all learners to achieve.

We have asked the school to continue to improve results at GCSE and in year 9 exams. One way to do that is to look carefully at those subjects where you only make satisfactory progress and see what can be improved further. We also suggested that the school looks at how it matches your work to your needs to ensure that it challenges you.

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for making our visit so enjoyable and we wish you every success for the future.

Lauren Ovenden HMI

Lead inspector