

Deptford Green School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100740
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	285870
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	David Hornbrook HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Pennant
Headteacher	Mr P Campling
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Amersham Vale New Cross London SE14 6LQ
Telephone number	020 8691 3236
Fax number	020 8694 1789

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Deptford Green School serves a south-London community with significant social deprivation. Half the students are entitled to free school meals. The school population is ethnically diverse; nearly three quarters are from minority ethnic groups. The number of students with learning needs or disabilities is well above average. The school lost its sixth form in 2004 after post-16 re-organisation in Lewisham. The school operates on two sites and is a specialist humanities college and an 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

Deptford Green is a good school with a record of steady improvement. When they leave, students' standards are comparable to the national average. While progress in the first three years is no better than satisfactory, so that standards are still below average at the end of Year 9, in Years 10 and 11 students' progress is impressive. Given the students' low starting points on joining the school, this means that achievement overall is good. The new headteacher is aware that he has inherited a loyal, committed and hard-working staff and a school accustomed to innovation. It has, for example, a pioneering citizenship programme and is developing successful restorative justice approaches to poor behaviour. Full advantage is taken of a large number of partnership arrangements; membership of a local federation of schools brings many benefits, not least in the development of the 14-19 curriculum. Excellent communications with parents have contributed to the school's popularity. As one parent said, 'I'm proud that my son is at Deptford Green'.

The new headteacher has been careful to acknowledge and build on the school's considerable existing strengths, such as the outstanding work on inclusion, while at the same time instituting the changes necessary for the school to continue to move forward. Discussions about performance and how it can be improved are rigorous and productive and comprehensive systems for monitoring activities at all levels are being introduced. The self-evaluation report gives a clear and honest assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although is yet to be integrated with departmental reviews. Firm and effective action is being taken in areas of under-performance, including those identified in the last inspection report.

The school's judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are robust and include contributions from students. Teaching is good overall, and much is outstanding, but the school knows that it must do more to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons. The school has invested heavily in the training of teachers and good practice is increasingly shared between the departments. Teachers know the students very well and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Students enjoy coming to school and say they are encouraged 'to do their best'. They are not yet sufficiently aware of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise, but they make an outstanding contribution to the school and to the wider community. The citizenship programme contributes significantly to students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as do the many arts initiatives. Older students act as peer mentors to younger ones and some are involved in the wider dissemination of aspects of the citizenship programme. One student is deputy young mayor of Lewisham.

The curriculum is well-matched to the school's intake with a good balance of academic and vocational options. Some students undertake 'taster' course in trades such as bricklaying and catering in a local college. The range of additional activities offered students is good, and the school runs revision sessions during the Easter holidays for those that need them. The care, guidance and support provided for students' academic and pastoral needs are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards achieved by students, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Encourage students to develop as independent learners.
- Ensure that students increasingly adopt healthy lifestyles.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are below average. They make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 although standards at the end of Year 9 remain below average. The improvement in pupils' standards in English and maths in Years 7 to 9 is having a positive effect on overall standards in these years. Students do much better in Years 10 and 11, so that by the end of Year 11 overall standards are broadly in line with national expectations as measured by students' average points score. In 2006, Black and Mixed Race groups achieved GCSE results above the national average. Because students make outstanding progress in Years 10 and 11, their overall progress in their time at the school is good; in 2006, the school was in the top 5% of schools nationally on this measure. Because of the quality of the support they receive, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others. The school sets challenging targets which it has exceeded in the past two years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good. The cultural diversity of the school is widely celebrated. One student said, 'You learn to be tolerant; our school isn't just one race or colour or religion, everyone is mixed'. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding with high levels of participation in cultural and community activities. The school continues to work hard to improve attendance and punctuality and attendance rates are now about average. Students have well-developed social skills and are courteous and well-behaved, both in lessons and in circulation areas. They enjoy school and feel safe there. Occasional incidents of racism and bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively and the number of students excluded has dropped significantly in the past year, an improvement judged by the school to be the result of its innovative programme of restorative justice. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. Some help train staff and students from other schools in aspects of their school which are particularly successful, while a pioneering project in Uganda, supported by the British Council, allows some students to exchange ideas about education with an African school. Students participate in a number of sports and other activities; the school has a national reputation for table tennis. However, although the canteen offers healthy food options, the school acknowledges that it still has work to do encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyles. Students have a strong voice in the school and feel that their views are listened to. The student council is effective and manages its own budget.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and in some cases outstanding. There is a consistent approach to lesson planning and class management across the school and students say that they enjoy their learning and that lessons are interesting. In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations, review the learning that has taken place and use information and communication technology (ICT) to bring the classroom alive. Students' respond well. Their interest is sustained with a variety of challenging tasks and behaviour is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to reinforce learning. For example, in a citizenship lesson, voting cards

were used to see how much students had understood. Students' work is assessed frequently and they feel that marking is helpful; they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Although lessons are invariably lively and well-managed, teachers do not give students sufficient time to themselves to develop as independent learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good, providing students with a wide and varied range of experiences and opportunities. Citizenship is a very considerable strength of the school and extends into the wider curriculum; science, mathematics, design technology and ICT are among the many subjects which have a citizenship component. Additional time provided for English and mathematics in Years 7 to 9 is having a positive impact on students' literacy and numeracy, while the early entry mathematics group in Year 10 gives time for higher attaining students to undertake more advanced study. In addition to the good range of academic and vocational options run by the school, Year 10 and 11 students also have access to courses elsewhere in the federation. Students follow a programme of careers education and guidance and undertake one week's work experience in Year 11. As part of the extended school provision there is an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities which takes place at lunch time and after school. Activities include enrichment in the arts and sports, catch-up and coursework classes and activities aimed at developing students' democratic participation. In one project, students worked closely with local police to examine the implications of stop and search involving young people and the results have been incorporated into police training.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care and support of students are outstanding. Child protection, health and safety and risk assessment procedures are robust. Arrangements for transition into the school are innovative and effective. Students and their parents appreciate all the school does to ensure students' overall welfare and enjoyment of learning. One student volunteered, 'Teachers here are our friends. We can go to them with anything and it will get fixed.' Inclusion has been a significant strength for many years and equality of opportunity is dynamically promoted. Personal and academic monitoring is very well managed and all students are clear about their targets. Arrangements for tracking, monitoring and supporting vulnerable students and their learning are exceptional. Excellent guidance and mentoring in Years 9 and 11 enable students to make realistic choices for work and further study and a very high proportion of Year 11 students continue on to the next stage of education or enter full-time training.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management ensure that Deptford Green continues to improve steadily. Leadership is innovative and challenging and imaginative management reorganisation is bringing a clearer focus on learning and an enhanced role for middle leaders. The senior team has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the priorities for development. Teachers are regularly observed in the classroom as part of performance management and are keenly supported by the school in a wide range of continuing professional development. Following his appointment, the new headteacher began a comprehensive process of strategic review and

consultation covering all aspects of the school's future, and this is enabling staff and students to face the ambitious changes which lie ahead with confidence. Governors manage their business effectively and many are involved with aspects of the work of the school. There are a number of successful and well-established partnership arrangements which enhance students' learning, such as a long standing link with an international bank. The school manages its resources well. Support staff are being trained to contribute more effectively to learning and the reorganisation of the lower school site will make better use of learning resources. The school has a good capacity for improvement.

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Annex A

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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	1

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.

Annex A

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

19 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Deptford Green School, London, SE14 6LQ

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we made about your school. We enjoyed meeting groups of you, talking to your teachers and visiting lessons. Your views are very important and helped us to understand your school. In the end we thought that Deptford Green is providing you with a good education.

- We were impressed by the progress you make, particularly in Years 10 and 11; as you know, your GCSE results are now similar to the national average
- We thought that you were courteous and well-behaved and very well looked after at school
- We were impressed by some of the pioneering initiatives at Deptford Green, such as citizenship, restorative justice and the emphasis given to your views and opinions
- We thought your headteacher and his team work extremely hard to help you do as well as possible at school. We know they are introducing changes to the way the school's run which should help you do even better

To make it even more successful we think your school needs to make sure that:

- you do as well in Years 7 to 9 as you do in Years 10 and 11
- you are able to learn independently of the teachers
- you adopt healthy lifestyles

Thank you for taking part in the inspection, by talking to us about your work and your life in school. We were very impressed by your mature and reflective views.

David Hornbrook
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools