



Cleeve Park School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101471
Local Authority Bexley
Inspection number 286073
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Michael Lynes HMI

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)	School address	Bexley Lane
School category	Community		Sidcup
Age range of pupils	11–19		DA14 4JN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8302 6418
Number on roll (school)	1029	Fax number	020 8308 1571
Number on roll (6th form)	97		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Denise Prior
		Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Hodkinson
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2002		

Age group 11–19	Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007	Inspection number 286073
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Cleeve Park is a non-selective, non-denominational community school. Bexley is selective, with the most able students attending local grammar schools or comprehensive faith schools. The student population is drawn from a wide range of primary schools. Attainment on entry is about the national average, but there are fewer more able students than found nationally. The school is undersubscribed, particularly in Year 7 where there are currently about 80 free places.

There are: significantly more boys than girls; a higher proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities, and a small number of students whose first language is not English. Absence is higher than the national average, and the school is now part of a national project to improve attendance.

The school has been a specialist engineering college since 2004. It is designated by the local authority as a school providing facilities for physically disabled students.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in some respects is inadequate: the sixth form; attendance; and, monitoring student performance. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

The school is emerging from a difficult period under the effective leadership of the recently appointed headteacher. The school receives good support from the local authority, who are keen to support improvement in the aspects identified in this report. GCSE results in English in 2006 were considerably lower than expected; although there were signs of improvement in the Key Stage 3 English tests. Achievement and standards in the sixth form are inadequate. Perhaps most importantly the school does not effectively monitor the academic progress of students. This leaves it vulnerable to underachievement.

A considerable amount of senior leadership time has been spent on ensuring that the school continued to run effectively during the previous difficulties. The new headteacher has worked assiduously to raise the morale of staff and improve the culture and ethos of the school. He has achieved this with great success in a relatively short time. However, this has resulted in a loss of focus in monitoring: the quality of teaching and learning; student achievement, and standards in the sixth form. The school accepts this, is fully committed to improving these areas, and has satisfactory capacity to do so. Student absence is higher than the national average, and remains stubbornly high despite the best efforts of the school. Some parents could do more to ensure that their children attend regularly.

Students like the school, feel safe and are loyal to it; one freely volunteering that 'I would have no problem with my child coming to this school'. They are confident, articulate and build good relationships with each other and staff. They are ready to achieve more than they currently do. The school is well placed to enable them to do so under the new leadership, and with the support and challenge of the local authority.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 4

The quality of provision in the sixth form is inadequate. Standards are too low and students do not achieve well enough across many subject areas. Progress is satisfactory in advanced vocational courses in science, and information and communication technology (ICT), and in advanced design and technology. Procedures for monitoring students' progress have been unsatisfactory and less rigorous than in Years 7 to 11.

Numbers joining the sixth form from Year 11 are very low. Of those students beginning courses in Year 12, around three quarters stay to complete examinations. This stems partly from the restricted choice of programmes that does not match students' needs well enough. In this respect, the post-16 curriculum is inadequate. Nevertheless,

students appreciate the satisfactory teaching, helpful personal guidance, the recently introduced supervised study support and the improvements in accommodation. Their personal development is satisfactory; some play an active part in school life as peer mentors and members of the school council. Others willingly make a difference by sharing responsibilities with staff for a range of day-to-day activities. Recent positive developments in the leadership and management of the sixth form have set it on the road to recovery. The clear analysis of weaknesses and the steps taken so far to bring about improvement indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify and remedy underachievement more rapidly through effective analysis of student performance
- Raise standards and achievement in English, particularly in Year 11
- Raise standards and achievement in the sixth form
- Increase levels of attendance

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 4

Examination results are about average in both Key Stages 3 and 4, but well below average in the sixth form. Students make satisfactory progress by Year 11, but underachieve in the sixth form. Examination results in Year 9 improved in 2006. This was the direct result of robust actions to improve English. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades has risen gradually. The number of students leaving with both GCSE English and mathematics at grade C or above is well below the national average. This is because of significantly lower than expected results in English, but also because information to check student progress has not been used effectively enough.

The school met the majority of its targets at both key stages, but acknowledges that not all groups of students achieve equally well. Girls and more able boys do not make fast enough progress. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to their peers. In the specialist engineering college subjects, students achieve well in resistant materials, food technology and mathematics. Their progress in engineering is currently unsatisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. The majority of students like coming to school. This is reflected in their positive attitudes and their good behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. Students report that bullying and racial harassment are usually dealt with effectively. Movement around the site is

orderly and occasional incidents of challenging behaviour are managed well. Although the school responds promptly to absence and has effective systems to track poor attendance, senior leaders are aware that more remains to be done to reward good attendance. Many students take up opportunities to be involved in the running of the school. The newly-formed school council is beginning to take an active role in school improvement. As one councillor commented, 'They take our views seriously'.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although there are some missed opportunities for their spiritual and cultural development. Displays of students' work and other materials such as art work, for example, are uninspiring and do little to enhance the learning environment.

Students are developing a good understanding of how to live healthily and recognise the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. Students develop good levels of self-confidence and have opportunities to engage in work-related learning. This contributes satisfactorily to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and generally meet the needs of all students. Though the school monitors teaching and learning, it is inconsistent. This results in lessons of variable quality, and there are not enough good lessons to ensure that students consistently make good progress. In the best lessons, students are challenged and made aware of what is expected of them. In a Year 10 history lesson, good pace, purpose and challenge, along with effective questioning, engaged the students in improving their knowledge and understanding of aspects of modern American history. At the start of most lessons students are told the learning objectives, and are aware of what is expected of them. Good working relationships are evident in many lessons.

The use of questioning by teachers is not always effective because it is sometimes the same students who volunteer to answer. Some lessons are slow paced, or rely too much on the use of a textbook; consequently some students become distracted. There are some good examples of pair and group work, but there are insufficient opportunities for students to work independently. The quality and consistency of marking varies widely. In some instances, students are not being told what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 4

The curriculum provides a framework for students to make satisfactory progress throughout the school. There is appropriate breadth and balance across Years 7 to 9.

A recent innovation has been to condense the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT into a two-year course. The results of this will not be evident until the end of this school year. In Years 10 and 11 more vocational courses are being introduced alongside the traditional GCSE courses. A personal, social, citizenship and education programme in Years 7 to 11 helps promote students' personal development as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result of the engineering specialism, the school has taken part in a range of enrichment activities related to business enterprise and work-related learning. Provision for ICT resources has improved and helps support teaching and learning in most subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 4

The school has satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding and protecting students and works effectively with outside agencies. Specialist status has enabled improved links with partner primary schools which has smoothed the transition to secondary school. Vulnerable pupils, including those with physical disabilities, are well supported and fully included in every aspect of school life. Older students say they feel confident about the next stage in their education. Teachers provide helpful options and careers advice, including support with university applications. Regular opportunities are available for parents and students to review progress.

Procedures for tracking academic progress have recently improved but are not yet used well enough to track patterns in the progress made by different groups of students. Neither does the tracking always effectively enable the early identification of potential underachievement by individual students. The school recognises that this is an area for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 4

The leadership of the recently appointed headteacher has had a significant impact on transforming the culture and ethos of the school. He enjoys the full confidence of students, staff and governors. He is well supported by the senior team in the smooth day-to-day running of the school. He has managed some difficult restructuring issues with tact and sensitivity. Middle managers report that they now feel like 'valued colleagues'. As a result the school is well placed to tackle the key areas for improvement: the monitoring and evaluation of student progress; attendance; achievement in English, and standards in the sixth form.

Systems to accurately monitor students' progress and evaluate the quality of teaching are not consistent across the school. Students' progress is tracked, but not always analysed effectively by senior and middle managers. This does not enable teachers to set sufficiently high expectations of what students can achieve. There are a variety of

systems in the school to monitor the quality of teaching. This prevents leaders and managers from sharing a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, and to focus sharply on improving it. There are now good plans in place for the local authority to provide training for all staff that will promote a shared understanding of how to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.

Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and policies are in place. They have worked well with the local authority to resolve some very difficult staffing issues. However, the governors' role in challenging the senior leadership on students' achievement is underdeveloped. They are aware of this and there are appropriate plans in place to address this.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	4	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
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	3	
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	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	4

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?	3	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

As you know we recently inspected your school. I am writing to let you know what we found and to thank you for your contribution. If you want to read the complete report you can download it from www.ofsted.gov.uk.

It was a pleasure to meet you and we were impressed by both your honesty and your behaviour during the inspection. You are clearly loyal to the school and want it to succeed. It was really good to hear that you feel the views of the new school council are taken seriously. You value your new headteacher and feel that he is making a real difference. Sixth formers told us that they are very positive about the way they are treated, the new arrangements for study support, and the improved accommodation.

We judged Cleeve Park to be satisfactory overall, but there are some areas that need improvement:

- Examination results in the sixth form
- GCSE results in English
- The way the school tracks your academic progress
- Attendance

It is possible that inspectors will return to see how well the school is doing in these areas before your next inspection. I am very confident that you will want to do your part to support the school in making these improvements.

With very best wishes

Michael Lynes
Her Majesty's Inspector