

Park View Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131757
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	293838
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1260
6th form	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Amobi Modu
Headteacher	Mr Alex Atherton
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Langham Road London N15 3RB
Telephone number	020 8888 1722
Fax number	020 8881 8143

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average mixed comprehensive school. It gained specialist schools status as an arts and language college in 2004. It takes students from a wide economically disadvantaged area of Haringey. A very high proportion (nearly nine tenths) of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and nearly two thirds of all students have English as an additional language. There are well above average proportions of students eligible for free school meals. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The attainment of students on entry to the school is very low and many students join the school with reading ages well below their chronological age. There is a high number of students who join or leave the school before Year 11. The small sixth form is due to close at the end of the current academic year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Park View Academy is a good and improving school. The headteacher, who has been in post for just over a year, has clear ambitions for the school which are fully shared by all staff and the governors. Consequently staff morale and motivation are high, thus ensuring that students thrive and achieve well.

Achievement is good overall. Standards have improved dramatically over the past five years (the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* - C grades has trebled) but fell in 2006. Standards have since recovered and are now close to the national average in year 11 and students are making good progress. This is because the decline in 2006 has been vigorously tackled by the new headteacher. Good use of assessment data to monitor progress, and changes to the Key Stage 4 curriculum have had an immediate effect and have ensured that most students are now reaching, or exceeding, the challenging targets set for them. A stronger and more consistent approach to lesson planning, following the introduction of a teaching and learning strategy, are ensuring that this improvement is sustained. In Year 9, student tracking in English, mathematics and science shows that many students who were underachieving, are now making good academic progress.

The school has succeeded in ensuring that students enjoy school, feel secure and are well informed about staying healthy. Recently introduced systems to check students' academic and personal development are robust, with exceptional examples of their use in English. Form tutors, curriculum team leaders and heads of year work together to support those students who are not making expected progress. As a result, the number of exclusions has dramatically fallen, attendance has consistently improved and, consequently, achievement and progress have improved. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is much improved and is now satisfactory. However, it is still a cause of concern for many students and their parents. The school displays a strong commitment to inclusion and addressing the needs of students from its many communities. For instance, the work of the specialist schools co-ordinator is beginning to strengthen the understanding between diverse cultures in the school and is reaching into the wider community.

The headteacher and senior staff have done much to promote effective learning and better management of subjects. For instance, in English, outstanding leadership is having an impact on teaching and learning so that students at all levels are making good progress. Here, students are given regular opportunities to practise their writing and are then involved in the process of evaluating each other's work, selecting good features of the writing and commenting on how it could be improved. Good models are then shared with the whole class. A small proportion of teaching is inadequate, often because, the level of challenge is too low and some students make insufficient progress.

The school works well in partnership with other schools and colleges to promote the well-being of students. Careers guidance, work experience and the enterprise programme develop and nurture students' work-related skills. The school recognises that a greater emphasis on developing students' literacy skills is needed to set them up better for the world of work. The impact of the school's specialist status in performing arts and languages is mixed. Aspects of drama, for example, have enhanced teaching in a range of subjects, but requirements in languages have constrained the curriculum of older students, whilst failing to address their literacy needs.

The school takes great care to ensure that the varying needs of its students are catered for effectively. It has a clearly identified programme for analysing the speaking skills of students whose first language is other than English and placing them in an appropriate teaching group while they settle, and before re-assessing their progress. Those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed on arrival following work with primary schools. This uniquely personalised provision ensures that these students make good progress. Teachers use assessment information intelligently to identify potential under-achievement and to encourage learning. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The school has consistently improved its test and examination results and students are now making good progress. Great strides have been made to improve attendance which is now only just below the national average and steadily rising. The strong and determined leadership of the school is having a positive and sustained impact on the standard of education provided. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Standards are below national average overall but most students make the progress that might be expected from their previous performance. This is because leadership and management of the sixth form are effective. The attitudes of most students are good; they relate well to their teachers and feel well supported. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers skillfully help students overcome their language difficulties, and encourage them to develop independent learning skills. However, students' lateness significantly delays the start of some lessons and slows learning. Systems for monitoring students' progress are satisfactory, but many students in year 12 do not attend with sufficient regularity or punctuality for assessed weaknesses to be fully dealt with. Relationships are good between students and between students and staff. Students appreciate the support of teachers and pastoral staff, and often respond positively to their advice. The school has ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of its' small number of students by working collaboratively with neighbouring colleges.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement by improving students' literacy skills.
- Improve teaching and learning so that more of it is good or better.
- Eliminate the pockets of inappropriate behaviour.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students' achievement is good. Standards on entry are very low and many students arrive with poor literacy skills. In 2006, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 were significantly below average. This was a decline from previous years which had showed a steady improvement. There was, however a significant improvement in attainment in mathematics and science. Evidence seen during the inspection reflects a strong improvement since these results, especially in English and overall standards have risen. Attainment in GCSE examinations shows a sharply rising trend over recent years - although it fell abruptly in 2006. As recently as 2001 the proportion gaining five or more GCSE grades A* - C was only fourteen per cent, this year fifty-three per cent of students are on target to reach this standard. The causes for the 2006

dip in performance have been tackled vigorously and the school is now back on track. Standards by the end of year 11 are currently close to those expected nationally. In addition, the school's effective action to improve the standards and achievement of lower attaining students and of girls, have made a major contribution to the good progress students are now making. Vulnerable students, those with learning difficulties, and those at an early stage of learning English, make good progress; a testimony to the effective care, guidance and support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They enthusiastically talk about their school and enjoy it, saying the school is a harmonious environment and relationships are good. Students and parents say they would like to see behaviour improve further. Exclusions were high but are now declining because students understand that sanctions will be enforced for misbehaviour. Students know the importance of keeping healthy; the school has recently been awarded healthy schools status. Attendance figures overall, but not in the sixth form, are constantly improving because of several strong initiatives. Better attendance has had a big impact on improving achievement. Students feel safe in the school and report that the site security staff makes the school a secure place. Vulnerable students gain confidence through using the student support service at break times and enjoy working with the trained mentors. School council members and year representatives enjoy their work. In taking on these responsibilities, students develop very good team and leadership qualities and learn important decision making skills. There are good links with primary partner schools. Whole school drama productions have boosted students' confidence as well as giving them the opportunity to perform for their peers and in international competitions. A year 11 student noted and;quot;Our performance of Macbeth left our audience transfixed, we were so surprised.and;quot; Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Themed days have a very good impact on reflection. Most students develop a thoughtful understanding of right from wrong.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers show enthusiasm for their subject and plan their lessons well with appropriate and varied activities. They ask well-chosen questions to help students deepen their understanding and they increasingly involve them in the assessment of their own work. There is very effective use of teaching assistants which helps ensure that students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those for whom English is not their first language make good progress. In a few lessons, the level of challenge is low and students become bored and disaffected. Behaviour is unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons which slows the pace of learning. The most effective teaching includes strategies for behaviour management, such as seating plans allowing for collaborative work in lessons.

The standards students achieve does not match the quality of teaching. Achievement is now good because of the intelligent use of performance data to detect underperformance and a vigilant approach to ensure that coursework deadlines are met. The school has begun to address

the variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the school, through a far sighted teaching and learning policy. This is beginning to have an impact on producing more consistency across subjects and is feeding the raise in standards. The school recognises that more needs to be done to embed this policy and produce greater consistency.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets the needs of individual students including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school is reviewing its curriculum at Key Stage 4 and the choice of subjects, including vocational ones has increased. There is a very successful alternative curriculum for those less able, with students being involved in many projects in the community which has motivated these students to attend more regularly. In year 7, humanities are taught as an integrated subject. Consequently, students have eight sessions a week in one classroom, providing continuity between primary and secondary school. Students enjoy the competitive element of enterprise education and have been successful in gaining first place in three enterprise competitions. However, there are inconsistencies in the development of basic skills across the curriculum. For instance, while there is good provision for work-related learning there are insufficient opportunities to develop some of the students' literacy skills. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. These are much appreciated by the students and are having a positive impact on their attainment and confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pastoral support is strong, blending together students' academic and personal development. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught well through tutorial sessions at the start of each day. This allows form tutors to get to know their students more effectively as learners and so supports student progress. Form tutors have a key role in academic guidance and have succeeded in creating a culture of self-belief amongst students. One student stated "underachieving isn't an option here." Homework planners, introduced this year, are encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their work and homework. Good attention is paid to risk assessments and child protection. Healthy life styles are encouraged through several popular clubs and sporting activities. The school works collaboratively with a range of other organisations to support those with attendance and behaviour problems and those at risk of exclusion. A range of good quality advice and guidance helps them plan the next stages in their lives. The range of options for further study and individual flexible programmes are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership focused on raising standards. He is effectively supported by senior leadership and middle management teams which have changed significantly during the last year. Increasingly rigorous self-evaluation is enabling managers to recognise more clearly the strengths of the school and address areas which need attention. Monitoring now focuses clearly on students' progress, with very effective procedures for target setting helping to raise their aspirations. Whilst strategies are in place to disseminate good practice, there remains some inconsistency between departments. The recently introduced teaching and learning policy, however is beginning to redress some of these inconsistencies and to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are committed and supportive of the school. They work closely with senior leaders and use their expertise to provide appropriate challenge and criticism. Financial management is sound, although some issues related to facilities management have yet to be addressed satisfactorily. Plans through 'Building Schools for the Future' are being developed to substantially improve accommodation.

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Annex A

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?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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	2	
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	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	2	
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	2	
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

18 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Park View Academy, London, N15 3RB

Thank you very much for making us welcome and for talking to us so frankly when we visited your school recently.

We have judged your school to be a good school. The overwhelming majority of you are working hard in lessons. Your standards in national tests and exams and in the work we have seen are improving and are about average. You make good progress. The teaching in your school is satisfactory with much that is good. Your teachers make lessons interesting and nearly all of you enjoy learning and show real interest. Most of you take a great deal of pride in your work. You are increasingly being given good guidance on how to check if you're making the progress you should.

Your teachers care about your personal development deeply. You feel safe and well cared for and you are confident that there are adults you can go to with problems.

To make your school an even better one, we have suggested that it:

- raise standards and achievement by improving your literacy skills.
- improve teaching and learning so that more of it is good or better.
- eliminate the pockets of inappropriate behaviour.

You too can play your part in helping your school achieve these aims.

Good luck with your studies,

Michael Merchant Lead inspector