



Central Foundation Boys' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100458
Local Authority Islington
Inspection number 296130
Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Harriet Harper HMI

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

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Cowper Street |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | London |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 | | EC2A 4SH |
| Gender of pupils | Boys | Telephone number | 02072533741 |
| Number on roll (school) | 821 | Fax number | 02073367295 |
| Number on roll (6th form) | 102 | | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Graham Forbes |
| | | Headteacher | Ms J Fortune |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 March 2003 | | |

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
| 11–18 | 20–21 September 2006 | 296130 |

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Central Foundation Boys' School is a smaller than average over-subscribed secondary school, with business and enterprise specialist status. It has a small sixth form that is part of a recently formed consortium with two other local schools. The proportion of boys who are eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average and over a quarter of the students have additional learning needs. Students have a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and a high proportion speak English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Central Foundation Boys' is a good school. The adults who work in the school have a clear focus on inclusion. They are dedicated to ensuring that no boy should be prevented from learning for any reason. Achievement is good. From a lower than average starting point, boys make good progress and achieve standards in line with national averages.

The school provides outstanding care and support, particularly for those students who do not speak English as a first language and those who have special educational needs. Recently, the staff have targeted support on those who are gifted and talented and have successfully raised the aspirations of this group of boys. The school provides an environment in which the boys feel safe. The atmosphere is calm and boys are well behaved

The school makes good use of its specialist business and enterprise status to help students to develop their employability skills and good awareness of the community. One initiative involves city bankers who act as mentors to raise the aspirations of boys, particularly those from minority ethnic groups. In turn, the school uses its expertise to support local primary and secondary schools. The school's international dimension encourages students to widen their horizons and reflect on issues around globalisation. With its British Council International School status, the school offers boys opportunities to learn less commonly taught languages such as Mandarin. These opportunities together with good progress in basic skills prepare pupils well for life in the workplace.

Central to the success of the school is consistently good teaching and effective leadership and management. Boys understand what is expected of them. They work hard and make good progress, whatever their starting point or background. They know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.

Through the self-evaluation process, senior managers are aware of the school's strengths and what they need to do to continue to improve. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Very recently, they have invested heavily in new information and communication technology (ICT) systems and recognise that staff need further training to use ICT more effectively to support students' learning. Achievement and standards have risen since the last inspection three years ago. Managers and teachers have clear strategies to continue to raise achievement in all curriculum areas. Given the school's track record in driving up standards, inspectors consider that the school has the capacity to improve still further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Standards achieved by students in the sixth form are in line with national averages. Most students make the progress expected of them. Those who take business vocational courses achieve well. The consortium has only been in place for two years and there is still some lack of clarity about who is responsible for what. Depending on their choice

of subjects, students may stay at Central Foundation for some or all of their lessons, or travel to one of the other schools in the consortium. Students from the other two schools, including girls, come to Central Foundation for some of their lessons. Those students who are taught at Central Foundation value highly the good quality of teaching but they are less satisfied with other aspects of the sixth form, such as arrangements for private study on site.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Improve the management of the consortium to raise achievement and standards in the sixth form.
- * Use ICT effectively to enhance teaching and learning across all curriculum areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Boys start school with standards that are lower than average. They make good progress and when they take tests and examinations at the end of Years 9 and 11 they reach standards close to national averages. At the end of Key Stage 3 the results are better in English and mathematics than in science. Boys' progress in English is particularly strong. Actions taken to improve science have begun to have an impact and the standard of students' work in this subject is now close to average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 have been rising over the last few years. The proportion of boys achieving five or more passes at GCSE has been consistently above national average. In 2006, around 57% of the students gained five or more high grade passes. These results reflect improvements in most subjects, although there were dips in technology and music.

All groups of students, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds make good progress between Years 7 and 11. With good teaching and outstanding support, boys who are eligible for free school meals make particularly good progress. Standards in the sixth form are average with most students making the progress expected of them, given their starting point.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Boys speak with confidence about their school and how they enjoy being there. The adults who work at the school successfully encourage the boys to think carefully about their actions. The 'safer schools' police officer makes a real contribution to students' understanding of personal safety and the impact of crime. Students generally adopt healthy lifestyles. They respond well to the school's clear and effective

policies to deal with bullying or other harassment. As a result, they feel safe and confident that there is someone who they can approach and that problems will be dealt with. Many students contribute to the school through the school council and the schemes for buddying and mentoring. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Attendance is above the national average, largely as a result of an excellent system to communicate with parents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching is good. Typically, students learn and achieve well because most lessons move at a brisk pace and involve the boys in a range of activities. Teachers take account of the boys' starting point, prepare appropriate work to challenge them and check regularly that they are making enough progress. This includes those students with additional learning needs or special educational needs, as well as gifted and talented boys. Some teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively in their lessons but not all teachers use ICT to help their students' learn.

Boys from all year groups say how much they enjoy practical activities and that they particularly like drama, music, using the computer and science experiments. Inspectors observed a Year 7 music lesson with boys engrossed in clapping rhythms and playing the recorder to a taped accompaniment. They also saw Year 9 students enthusiastically competing in a game in a Chinese lesson, using the target language with confidence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is well matched to the boys' needs and aspirations. In Years 10 and 11, boys have a good choice of vocational and academic subjects and they engage in work-related learning, enterprise activities and a two-week work experience programme, gaining valuable employability skills. The sixth form consortium has widened the offer of courses for the students and almost all Year 11 pupils go on to some form of further education. Health and social services, and the police, make a positive contribution to the curriculum and students' personal, social, health and citizenship education.

The excellent range of enrichment activities and extended services in lunchtime and after school enhances boys' enjoyment and achievement in school. Links with Sadlers Wells Theatre have led to some of the boys performing on stage. Other popular activities include fencing, fishing, music technology and keyboard skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The care, guidance and support for students in the main school are outstanding. In the sixth form the support is good. Child protection and risk assessment systems are robust and all staff receive regular training on these issues. Support for the many students whose first language is not English is excellent. The academic progress of all students is closely monitored and results of assessments are used effectively to give students challenging targets. Careers advice is comprehensive. Through lessons, individual interviews and access to a wide variety of information students, students feel sufficiently knowledgeable and confident to make choices about their future. Those experiencing particular problems are quickly identified and receive outstanding support. Learning mentors work with them and their families as well as running a number of activities such as the drop-in club at lunchtimes. An inclusion centre within the school provides excellent support in a safe structured environment for those in danger of exclusion and those returning to school after exclusion.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher's leadership is very efficient and effective. Her senior team work in close partnership with her and with one another. There is a clear and energetic drive, shared among the team and indeed all managers, to raise standards and ensure that all boys fulfil their potential. An important feature of the school's effective leadership is the regular and structured observation of teachers' performance, including that of the team itself. The school has built on the success of the previous inspection report. The consistency of teaching across the school has improved significantly, issues around recruitment of staff have been addressed and accommodation is being enhanced. Managers have identified strategies to improve standards in the sixth form and to clarify the management arrangements of the newly formed consortium. The management team works effectively in partnership with outside bodies to ensure that wherever possible the emotional and psychological needs of pupils are met and to promote respect for one another. The school's trustees and the governing body effectively support the leadership, providing specialist knowledge and advice. Resources are used well and the school provides good value for money.

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 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

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? | 1 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 2 | |
| 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 | 2 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 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 | 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 | 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

Thank you for contributing to the inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say about your school.

We agree with you that your school is good. The teachers make lessons interesting and challenging for you. With your new computers and new interactive whiteboards, we think you and your teachers can now begin to use this equipment more to help you learn. Because you work hard and have good teachers, you make good progress and generally do well in tests and examinations. We were pleased to see that you behave well.

You have a good choice of subjects when you get to Years 9 and 10. For those of you who stay at the school for Years 12 and 13 you can also choose courses offered at two other schools. We think the school could do more to improve the way this sixth form arrangement works. You have excellent opportunities to take part in sports, music and drama activities during the lunch time and after school, as well as trips abroad.

The school is well managed. The adults who work in the school really care about you and provide excellent support for all you. They work hard to ensure that you enjoy school and that you stay healthy and safe.

We hope you continue to behave well, work hard and enjoy yourselves at school.

Thank you again.

Harriet Harper HMI

Lead Inspector